CHAPTER 4
OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Offensive operations in restrictive terrain were the driving forces behind the creation of the SBCT infantry platoon. This chapter explains the platoon's conduct of those offensive techniques and procedures. The SBCT infantry platoon has great flexibility due to its organic mobility and robust infantry organization. Success for the SBCT infantry platoon depends on its ability to maximize this organic flexibility to mass combat power at key times and places. The increased mobility used in conjunction with its light infantry ethos allows the SBCT infantry platoon to move faster and farther and react quickly to changes in the tactical situation. Thus, this unit is not constrained by the time-space problem that has historically faced the light infantry.

Section I. FUNDAMENTALS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The outcome of decisive combat derives from offensive operations. Only through offensive operations can a platoon close with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver to destroy or capture him or to repel his assault by fire, close combat, and counterattack. While tactical considerations may call for the platoon to execute defensive operations for a period of time, defeat of the enemy requires a shift to offensive operations. To ensure the success of the attack, the platoon leader must understand the following fundamentals of offensive operations and apply the troop-leading procedures during the operations process. (For a discussion on the operations process, refer to Chapter 2.) A sound doctrinal foundation during offensive planning assists the platoon leader in capitalizing on the tactical flexibility of the SBCT infantry platoon.

4-1. CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity characterize all offensive operations. To maximize the value of these characteristics, platoon leaders must apply the following considerations.

a. **Surprise.** Platoons achieve surprise by attacking the enemy at a time or place he does not expect, or in a manner for which he is unprepared. Unpredictability and boldness, within the scope of the commander's intent, help the platoon to gain surprise. Total surprise is rarely essential; simply delaying or disrupting the enemy's reaction is usually effective. Surprise delays the enemy's reactions, stresses his command and control, and induces psychological shock in his soldiers and leaders. The platoon's ability to attack during limited visibility, to operate as a small unit, and to infiltrate are often key to achieving surprise. The platoon must exploit the effect of surprise on the enemy before he can recover.

b. **Concentration.** Platoons achieve concentration by massing overwhelming effects of their weapons systems and rifle squads, without necessarily massing platoon vehicles and squads at a single location, to achieve a single purpose. Because the attacker moves across terrain the enemy has prepared, he may expose himself to the enemy's fires. By concentrating overwhelming combat power, the attacker can reduce the effectiveness of enemy fires and the amount of time he is exposed to those fires. Modern navigation tools

(such as GPS) allow the platoon leader to disperse his vehicles while retaining the ability to quickly mass the effects of the platoon's weapons systems whenever necessary.

c. **Tempo.** Tempo is the rate of speed of military action. Controlling or altering that rate is essential for maintaining the initiative. While a fast tempo is preferred, the platoon leader must remember that synchronization sets the stage for successful accomplishment of the platoon's mission. To support the commander's intent, the platoon leader must ensure that his platoon's movement is synchronized with the company's movement and with that of the other platoons. If the platoon is forced to slow down because of terrain or enemy resistance, the commander can alter the tempo of company movement to maintain synchronization. The tempo may change many times during an offensive operation. The platoon leader must remember that it is more important to move using covered and concealed routes to positions from which the platoon can mass the effects of direct fires on the enemy than it is to maintain precise formations and predetermined speeds.

d. **Audacity.** Audacity is a simple plan of action, boldly executed. It is the willingness to risk bold action to achieve positive results. Knowledge of the commander's intent two levels up allows the platoon leader to take advantage of battlefield opportunities whenever they present themselves, enhancing the effectiveness of the platoon's support for the entire offensive operation. Audacity, marked by disciplined initiative, inspires soldiers to overcome adversity and danger.

4-2. TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The four types of offensive operations, described in FM 3-90, are *movement to contact*, *attack*, *exploitation*, and *pursuit*. Companies can execute movements to contact and attacks. Platoons generally conduct these forms of the offense as part of a company. Companies and platoons participate in a higher unit's exploitation or pursuit. The nature of these operations depends largely on the amount of time and enemy information available during the planning and preparing for the operation phases. Companies and platoons participate in an exploitation or pursuit as part of a larger force.

a. **Movement to Contact.** The movement to contact (MTC) is a type of offensive operation designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact. The platoon will likely conduct an MTC as part of a company when the enemy situation is vague or not specific enough to conduct an attack. (For a detailed discussion of MTC refer to Section V.)

b. **Attack.** An attack is an offensive operation that destroys enemy forces or seizes or secures terrain. Movement, supported by fires, characterizes the conduct of an attack. The platoon will likely participate in a synchronized company attack. However a platoon may conduct a special purpose attack as part of, or separate from, a company offensive or defensive operation. Special purpose attacks consist of ambush, spoiling attack, counterattack, raid, feint, and demonstration. (For a detailed discussion of attack and special purpose attacks refer to Section VI.)

c. **Exploitation.** Exploitations are conducted at the battalion level and higher. The objective of exploitation is to complete the destruction of the enemy following a successful attack. Companies and platoons may conduct movements to contact or attacks as part of a higher unit's exploitation.

d. **Pursuit.** Pursuits are conducted at the company level and higher. A pursuit typically follows a successful exploitation. The pursuit is designed to prevent a fleeing

enemy from escape and to destroy him. Companies and platoons may conduct attacks as part of a higher unit's exploitation.

4-3. FORMS OF MANEUVER

Given the typical sequence for offensive operations (refer to Section II), the platoon maneuvers against the enemy in an area of operation. Maneuver places the enemy at a disadvantage through the application of friendly fires and movement. The five forms of maneuver are:

- Envelopment.
- Turning movement.
- Infiltration.
- Penetration.
- Frontal attack.

a. **Envelopment.** Envelopment (Figure 4-1, page 4-4) is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to avoid the principal enemy defenses by seizing objectives to the enemy rear or flank in order to destroy him in his current positions. "Flank attacks" are a variant of envelopment in which access to the enemy's flank and rear results in enemy movement. A successful envelopment requires discovery or creation of an assailable flank. The envelopment is the preferred form of maneuver because the attacking force tends to suffer fewer casualties while having the most opportunities to destroy the enemy. A platoon may conduct the envelopment by itself or as part of the company's attack. Envelopments focus on:

- Seizing terrain.
- Destroying specific enemy forces.
- Interdicting enemy withdrawal routes.
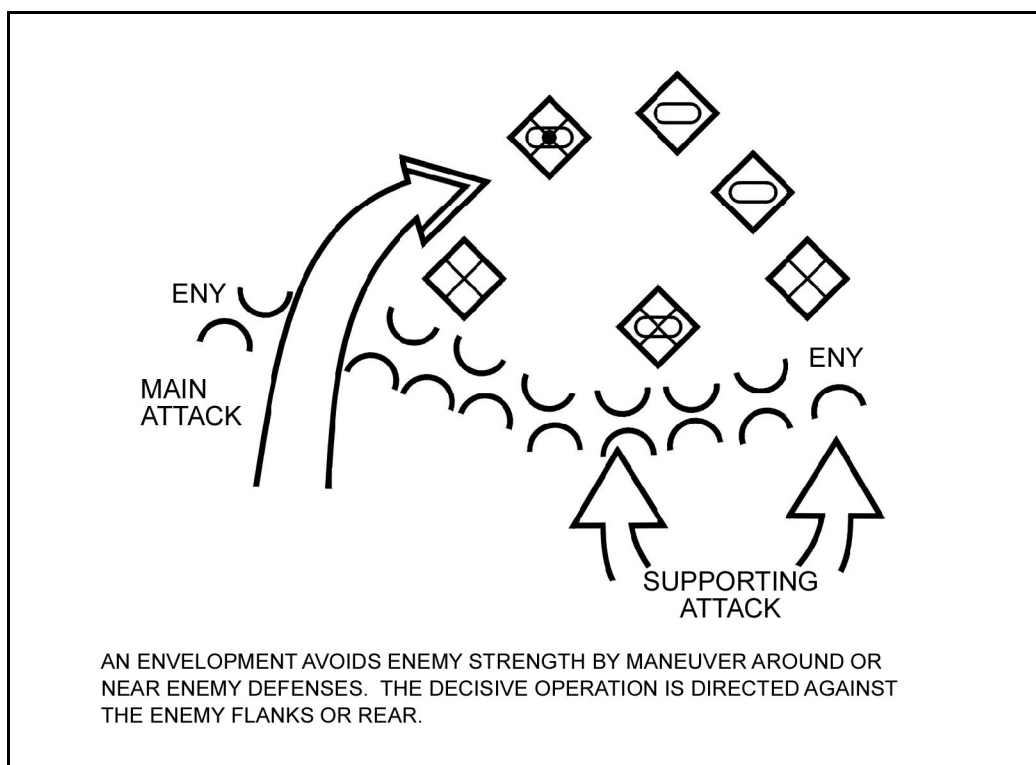
Figure 4-1. Envelopment.

b. **Turning Movement.** Turning movement (Figure 4-2) is a form of maneuver in which the attacking force seeks to avoid the enemy's principal defensive positions by seizing objectives to the enemy's rear and causing the enemy to move out of his current positions or to divert major forces to meet the threat. For a turning movement to be successful, the unit trying to turn the enemy must attack something that the enemy will fight to save. This may be a supply route, artillery emplacement, or a headquarters. In addition to attacking a target that the enemy will fight to save, the attacking unit should be strong enough to pose a real threat to the enemy. A platoon likely will conduct a turning movement as part of a company supporting a battalion attack.

NOTE: The turning movement is different from envelopment because the force conducting the turning movement seeks to make the enemy displace from his current location whereas an enveloping force seeks to engage the enemy in his current location from an unexpected direction.
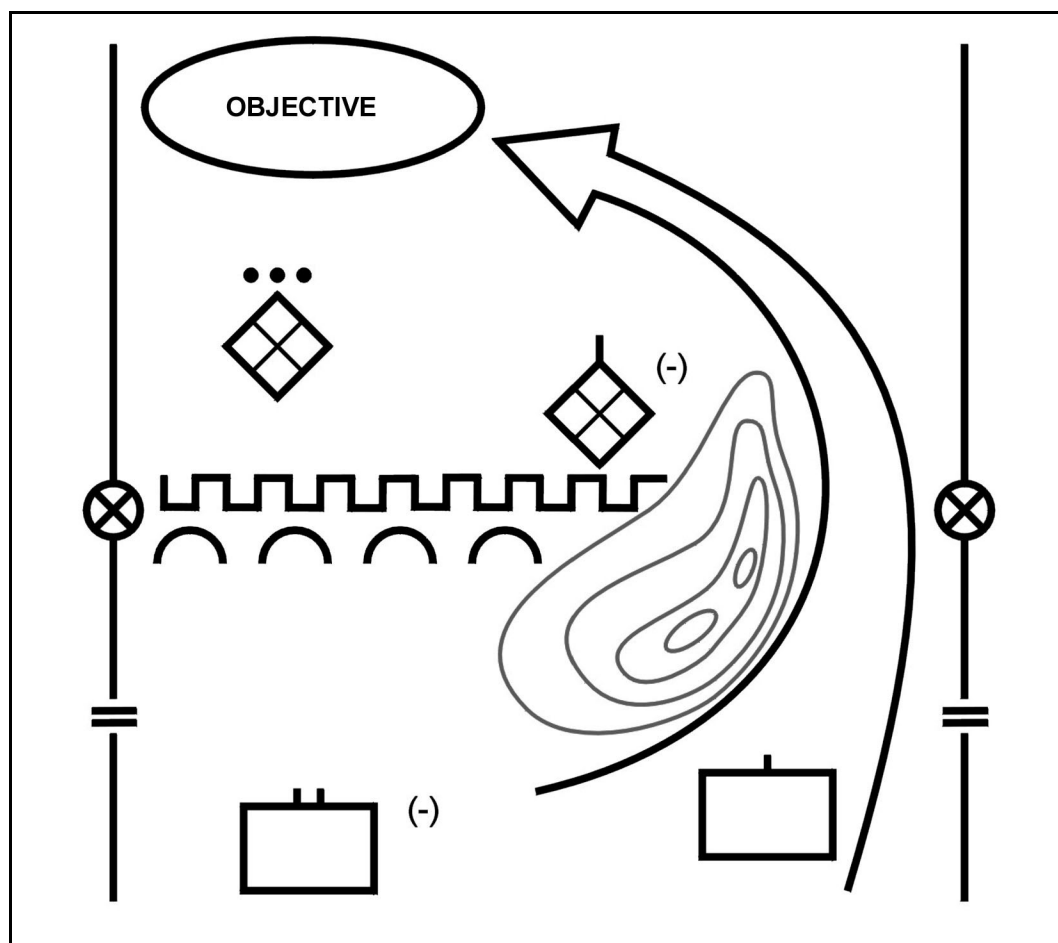
Figure 4-2. Turning movement.

c. **Infiltration.** Infiltration (Figure 4-3, page 4-6) is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy rear while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires. Moving and assembling forces covertly through enemy positions takes a considerable amount of time. A successful infiltration reaches the enemy's rear without fighting through prepared positions. An infiltration normally is used in conjunction with and in support of another form of maneuver. A platoon may conduct an infiltration (dismounted or mounted) as part of a larger unit's attack with the company employing another form of maneuver. The platoon leader also may employ infiltration to maneuver his squads to a location to support the attack of the mounted element. A platoon may conduct an infiltration in order to:

- Attack enemy-held positions from an unexpected direction.
- Occupy a support-by-fire position to support an attack.
- Secure key terrain.
- Conduct ambushes and raids.
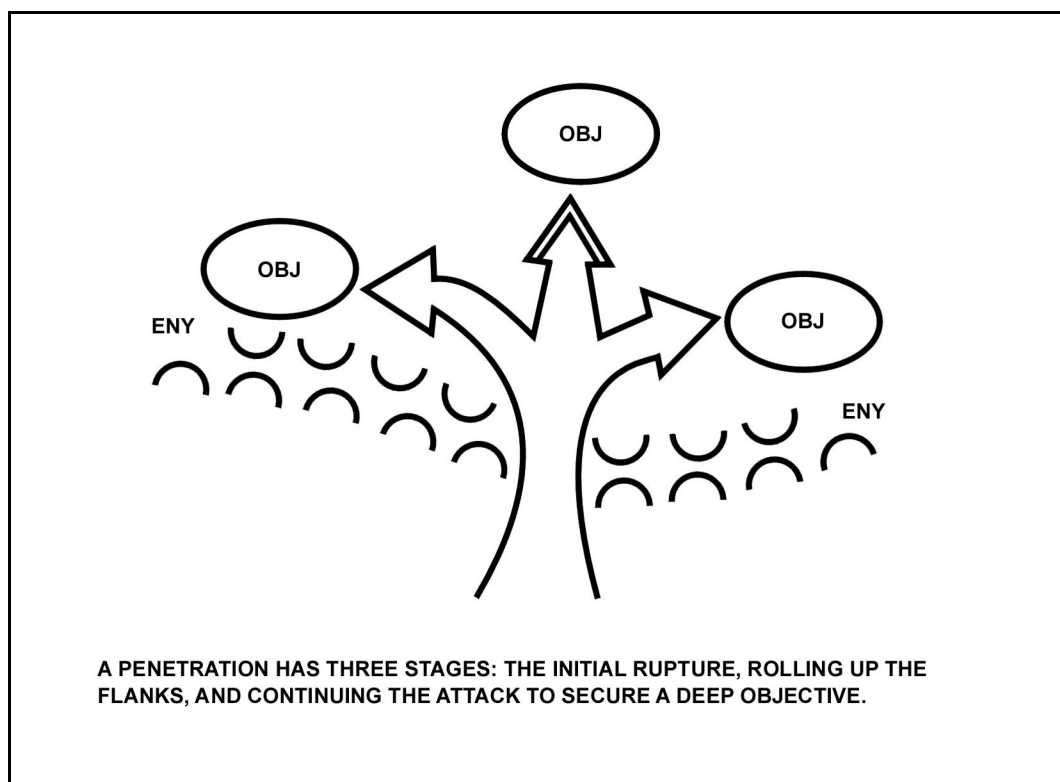- Conduct a covert breach of an obstacle.
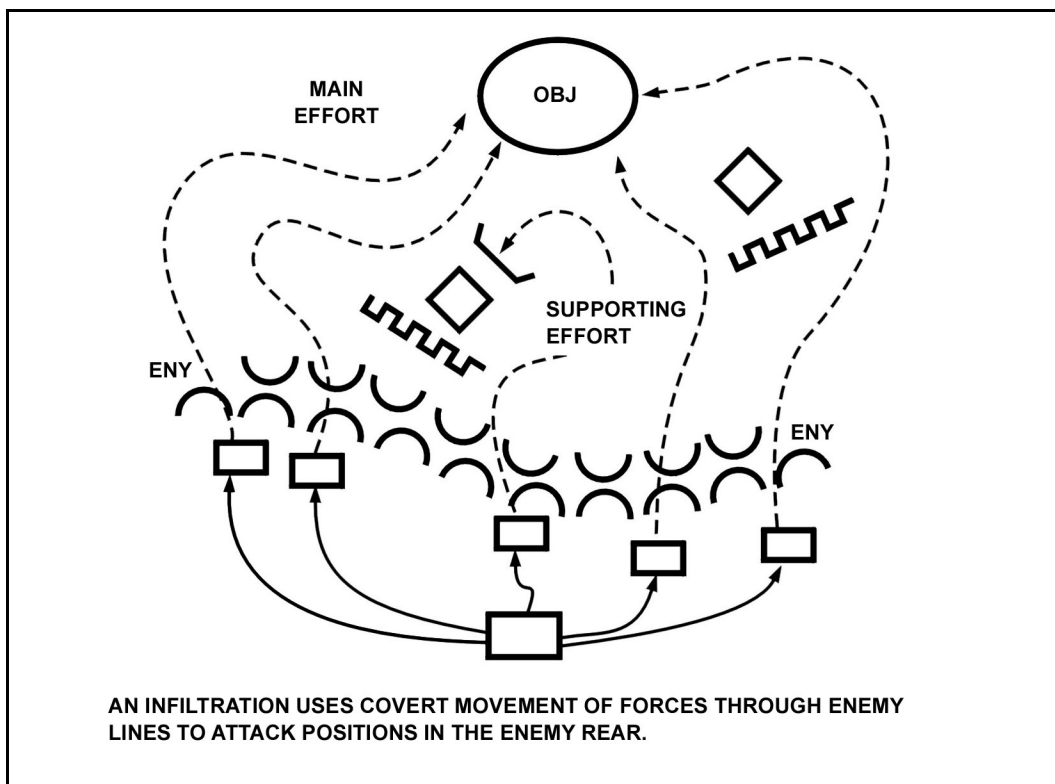
Figure 4-3. Infiltration.

 d. **Penetration.** Penetration (Figure 4-4) is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to rupture enemy defenses on a narrow front to create both assailable flanks and access to the enemy's rear. Penetration is used when enemy flanks are not assailable, when enemy defenses are overextended, when weak spots in the enemy defense are identified, and when time does not permit some other form of maneuver. A penetration normally consists of three steps:

- Breach the enemy's main defense positions.
- Widen the gap created to secure flanks by enveloping one or both of the newly exposed flanks.
- Seize the objective.

As part of a larger force penetration, the platoon will normally isolate, suppress, fix, or destroy enemy forces, breach tactical or protective obstacles in the enemy's main defense, secure the shoulders of the penetration, or seize key terrain. A company also may use the penetration to secure a foothold within a built-up area.

A PENETRATION HAS THREE STAGES: THE INITIAL RUPTURE, ROLLING UP THE FLANKS, AND CONTINUING THE ATTACK TO SECURE A DEEP OBJECTIVE.

Figure 4-4. Penetration.

e. **Frontal Attack.** Frontal attack is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to destroy a weaker enemy force or fix a larger enemy force along a broad front. It is the least desirable form of maneuver because it exposes the attacker to the concentrated fire of the defender and limits the effectiveness of the attacker's own fires. However, the frontal attack is often the best form of maneuver for an attack in which speed and simplicity are key; it is useful in overwhelming weak defenses, security outposts, or disorganized enemy forces.

Section II. SEQUENCE OF OFFENSIVE OPERATION

As the platoon leader plans for an offensive mission, he generally considers the following sequence of events that applies to many, but not all, offensive operation.

- Assembly area.
- Reconnaissance.
- Movement to the line of departure.
- Maneuver.
- Deployment.
- Assault
- Consolidation and reorganization.

4-4.   ASSEMBLY AREA

The platoon leader plans for the upcoming mission, and directs and supervises mission preparations in the assembly area (AA) to prepare the platoon for the upcoming battle. Preparation time in the assembly area allows the platoon to conduct precombat checks

and inspections, rehearsals, and CSS activities. Typically, the platoon will conduct these preparations within a company AA. Rarely will the platoon occupy its own assembly area.

4-5.   RECONNAISSANCE

All leaders should aggressively seek information about the terrain and the enemy. The enemy situation and available planning time may limit a unit's reconnaissance. In this circumstance, the platoon likely will conduct reconnaissance to answer the company commander's PIR. An example may be to reconnoiter and time routes from the AA to the LD. The platoon may also augment the efforts of the battalion reconnaissance platoon to answer the commander's PIR.

4-6.   MOVEMENT TO THE LINE OF DEPARTURE

The platoon will typically move from the AA to the LD as part of the company movement plan. This movement plan may direct the platoon to move to an attack position (ATK PSN) to await orders to cross the LD. If so, the platoon leader must reconnoiter, time, and rehearse the route to the ATK PSN and reconnoiter the actual position. Section and squad leaders must know where they are to locate within the assigned ATK PSN. The ATK PSN is the last position an attacking force occupies or passes through before crossing the LD. The company commander may order all of the platoons to move within a company formation from the AA directly to the point of departure (PD) at the LD. The PD is the point where the unit crosses the LD and begins moving along a direction of attack or axis of advance. If one PD is used, it is important that the lead platoon, as well as the trail platoons, reconnoiters, times, and rehearses the route to the PD. This allows the company commander to maintain synchronization. The company commander may also designate a PD along the LD for each platoon in order to maintain synchronization and flexibility.

4-7.   MANEUVER

The company commander will plan the approach of all platoons to the objective to ensure synchronization, security, speed, and flexibility. He will select the routes, movement techniques and formations and the methods of movement (mounted or dismounted) of the platoons that best support his intent for actions on the objective. The platoon leader must recognize this portion of the battle as a fight, not as a movement. He must be prepared to make contact with the enemy. (For a detailed discussion of actions on contact refer to Section IV.) He must plan accordingly to reinforce the commander's needs for synchronization, security, speed, and flexibility. During execution, he may display disciplined initiative and alter his platoon's formation, technique, or speed to maintain synchronization with the other platoons and flexibility for the company commander.

4-8.   DEPLOYMENT

As the platoon deploys and moves toward the assault position (ASLT PSN), it begins the final positioning of the squads or ICVs, as directed by the company commander, to minimize delay and confusion. An ASLT PSN is a covered and concealed position short of the objective from which final preparations are made to assault the objective. This tactical positioning allows the platoon to move in the best tactical posture through the

ASLT PSN into the attack. Movement should be as rapid as the terrain, unit mobility, and the enemy situation permit. The probable line of deployment (PLD) is usually the next control measure following the ASLT PSN; however, the PLD may be located within the ASLT PSN. The PLD is a phase line that the company commander designates as the location where he intends to completely deploy his unit into the assault formation before beginning the assault.

4-9. ASSAULT

During an offensive operation, the platoon's objective may be terrain-oriented or force-oriented. Terrain-oriented objectives may require the platoon to seize or retain a designated area and often require fighting through enemy forces. If the objective is force-oriented, an AO may be assigned for orientation, but the platoon's efforts are focused on the enemy's actual location. Actions on the objective begin when the company or platoon begins placing direct and indirect fires on the objective. This may actually occur while the platoon is still moving toward the objective from the ASLT PSN or PLD.

4-10. CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION

The platoon consolidates and reorganizes as required by the situation and mission. Consolidation is the process of organizing and strengthening a newly captured position so that it can be defended. Reorganization is the actions taken to shift internal resources within a degraded unit to increase its level of combat effectiveness. The platoon executes follow-on missions as directed by the company commander. A likely mission may be to continue the attack against the enemy within the AO. Regardless of the situation, the platoon must posture itself and prepare for continued offensive operations.

Section III. BATTLEFIELD OPERATING SYSTEMS PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The battlefield operating systems (BOS) are a listing of critical tactical activities that provides a means of reviewing preparation and execution. Synchronization and coordination among the BOS are critical for success. Selected BOS are addressed in this section. For a detailed discussion of command and control and intelligence, refer to Chapter 2.

4-11. MANEUVER

The purpose of maneuver is to close with and destroy the defending enemy. Maneuver requires a base-of-fire element to suppress and or destroy enemy forces with accurate direct fires and bounding elements to gain positional advantage over the enemy. When effectively executed, maneuver leaves enemy elements vulnerable by forcing them to fight in two directions, robbing the enemy of the initiative, and ultimately limiting his tactical options.

4-12. FIRE SUPPORT

The platoon may be able to employ indirect fires from field artillery or company and or battalion mortars to isolate a small part of the enemy defense or to suppress the enemy on the objective. The platoon leader must always keep in mind the potential danger to friendly elements created by indirect fires used in support of the assault. He must ensure

that the indirect fire assets always know the position and direction of movement of the assault force.

4-13. MOBILITY, COUNTERMOBILITY, AND SURVIVABILITY

The platoon will likely focus on "mobility" during offensive operations. The platoon may be required to breach obstacles as part of an offensive operation. These may be protective obstacles that the platoon is expected to breach without additional assets, or these may be tactical obstacles that require engineer assets in order to breach. Refer to FM 3-34.2 for a detailed discussion of breaching.

4-14. AIR DEFENSE

Avengers or Linebackers may operate in the platoon's AO. Although these assets do not necessarily work for or with the platoon, the platoon may have a specified (or implied) task to secure these air defense assets. The platoon leader must take this into consideration during planning. The platoon leader should also address how to react to enemy air assets if no external assets are available or operating within his AO. Unit standing operating procedures (SOPs) should dictate internal air security measures and active air defense measures. Refer to Chapter 8 for a detailed discussion of air defense capabilities and procedures.

4-15. COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT

The primary purpose of CSS in the offense is to assist the platoon and company in maintaining momentum during the attack. Key CSS planning considerations for the platoon leader during the offense include--

- Increased consumption of Class III supplies.
- High expenditure of ammunition for selected tactical tasks.
- High casualty rate and how to evacuate the casualties.
- Vehicle maintenance and recovery requirements.

Section IV. ACTIONS ON CONTACT

The four-step process for actions on contact is not a rigid, lockstep response to enemy contact; rather, it provides an orderly framework to help the platoon survive the initial contact. Leaders can follow up with sound decisions and act promptly to complete the operation. The platoon must react instinctively and instantly to the contact. The platoon leader's initial consideration should be, "Did the enemy see us before we deployed to cover?" The platoon leader decides what to do--he can have the platoon execute a planned battle drill or plan, or he can recommend to the company commander that the platoon execute an alternate drill or action. (See Appendix E for battle drills and crew drills.) At times, the platoon leader and his platoon must execute more than one of these steps at the same time. This is why the platoon must prepare thoroughly for contact situations. To ensure the platoon works well as a team and reacts correctly, yet instinctively, the platoon leader must rehearse battle drills and established unit SOPs. He must also conduct comprehensive training. The four-step process gives the platoon leader a logical, well-organized decision-making process for executing actions on contact. The four steps are:

- Deploy and report.
- Evaluate and develop the situation.
- Choose a course of action.
- Recommend and execute a course of action.

4-16. DEPLOY AND REPORT

The platoon leader deploys the platoon when he recognizes one of the general categories of initial contact or receives a report of enemy contact.

a. Contact situations include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Visual contact (friendly elements may or may not be observed by the enemy).
- Physical contact with a superior, inferior, or unknown enemy.
- Indirect fire contact.
- Contact with obstacles of enemy or unknown origin.
- Contact with enemy or unknown aircraft.
- Situations involving NBC conditions.
- Situations involving electronic warfare tactics such as jamming, interference, and imitative deception.

b. When the platoon makes contact with the enemy, the platoon leader responds according to the circumstances of the situation. The squad or vehicle that makes initial contact must react as appropriate. The platoon leader has several choices in deploying the platoon. In many cases, he will initiate one of the battle drills for the platoon (Appendix E). He also can order his sections or squads to immediately seek the best available covered and concealed position. (If mounted, the platoon leader determines whether or not to dismount the rifle squads.) The position should afford unobstructed observation and fields of fire and allow the platoon to maintain flank security. ICV crews also will seek cover and concealment in the absence of a deployment order from the platoon leader. This step concludes with the platoon leader or platoon sergeant sending a contact report to the company commander followed as soon as possible by a spot report (SPOTREP).

4-17. EVALUATE AND DEVELOP THE SITUATION

While the platoon deploys by executing a battle drill or occupying a covered and concealed position, the platoon leader must begin to evaluate the situation and, as necessary, develop it. His primary focus is on determining or confirming the *size* (inferior or superior), *composition* (available weapon systems), *activity*, and *orientation* of the enemy force. He analyzes how obstacles and terrain in the AO will affect enemy and friendly capabilities and possible courses of action. The platoon leader uses reports from his section and squad leaders, other platoon leaders, the executive officer, and the company commander to make his evaluation.

a. Because the platoon usually operates as part of a company, battalion reconnaissance elements or other assets may be available to assist the commander and platoon leader in evaluating and developing the situation.

b. There are no established rules for determining the level of superiority of an enemy in relation to the platoon; the result is dependent on the situation. The general criteria are as follows:

(1) *Inferior Force.* An inferior force is defined as an enemy element that the platoon can destroy while remaining postured to conduct further operations.

(2) *Superior Force.* A superior force is one that can be destroyed only through a combined effort of company- or battalion-level combat and CS assets.

c. The platoon leader evaluates the enemy's capabilities, especially the number of lethal weapon systems that he knows the enemy has. He also considers the enemy's recent activities.

d. The enemy's lethality options vary. The enemy might use rapid-fire antitank weaponry, slow-firing wire-guided systems, or dismounted soldiers with automatic weapons. He can entrench forces in prepared fighting positions, or he can conduct a refueling operation with little security.

e. After making contact and evaluating the situation, the platoon leader may discover that he does not have enough information to determine the superiority or inferiority of the enemy force. To make this determination, he can further develop the situation using a combination of techniques including fire and maneuver, indirect fire, reconnaissance by fire, and surveillance. In such a situation, however, the platoon leader must exercise caution, ensuring that his actions support the commander's intent.

f. The platoon leader's most crucial considerations include mission accomplishment and the survivability of the platoon. Once the platoon leader determines what the platoon is up against, he or the platoon sergeant sends an updated SPOTREP to the company commander. Once the platoon leader develops the situation and determines that he has enough information to make a decision, he selects a COA that accomplishes the mission, meets the requirements of the commander's intent, and is within the platoon's capabilities. He has several options in determining the COA:

- Direct the platoon to execute the original plan. The platoon leader selects the COA specified by the commander in the OPORD.
- Based on the situation, issue FRAGOs to refine the plan, ensuring it supports the company commander's intent.
- Report the situation and recommend to the company commander an alternative course of action based on known information in response to an unforeseen enemy or battlefield situation.
- Direct the platoon to execute tactical movement (employing bounding overwatch and support by fire within the platoon) and reconnaissance by fire to further develop the situation and gain the information he needs to clarify a vague battlefield picture.

4-18. CHOOSE A COURSE OF ACTION

The platoon leader will have little time for analysis at this point, but he should already have developed a clear understanding of the available COAs. He considers the commander's intent and guidance to help him determine his choice of a COA.

a. In most cases, the commander will have identified the criteria for anticipated actions on contact in terms of the enemy's capabilities (that is, whether the enemy is a superior or inferior force). He will have specified criteria for destroying, fixing, and bypassing the enemy as well as the applicable disengagement criteria. He evaluates various reactions to possible enemy actions during planning, in the company rehearsal,

during his informal war-gaming, and during platoon rehearsals. He also should plan for the employment of indirect fires to support his COA.

b. Refinements to the original plan or development of a new COA may change the scheme of maneuver. In most situations, the intent of maneuver is to gain positions of advantage over the enemy, forcing him to fight in an unintended direction. One element moves to the position of advantage while another element overwatches and supports. Control of indirect fires is shifted to the observer who can best call for and adjust fire on the enemy. If necessary, the platoon leader issues a revised set of graphic control measures as part of the FRAGO.

4-19.   RECOMMEND AND EXECUTE A COURSE OF ACTION
Once he has chosen a COA, the platoon leader continues his evaluation of the situation by determining whether or not his COA aligns with the commander's intent and guidance from the order or rehearsal. If so, he orders the platoon to execute it, and he reports his intentions to the company commander.

a. If, however, the situation dictates a change from the original plan, the platoon leader must recommend a new COA to the commander. He then directs the platoon to execute the COA selected by the commander. The platoon leader communicates with other platoon leaders as necessary to obtain support in accordance with (IAW) the commander's intent.

b. More information will become available as the platoon executes its COA. The platoon leader or platoon sergeant keeps the company commander abreast of the situation with SPOTREPs and SITREPs. Accuracy of these reports is critical because the battalion commander and S2 eventually use them to confirm or deny the enemy situational template.

c. Key information the commander needs includes the size, activity, location, unit, time observed, equipment (SALUTE) of any enemy elements that the platoon has observed, engaged, destroyed, or bypassed. The platoon leader also informs the commander of the platoon's current location or destination and of any changes in the platoon's combat power or logistical status.

d. Based on details of the enemy situation, the platoon leader may have to alter his plan during execution. For example, as the platoon maneuvers to destroy what appears to be a lone enemy vehicle, it might discover six more in prepared fighting positions (a superior force). In this case, the platoon leader informs the commander and recommends an alternate COA, such as the platoon occupying a support-by-fire position while the remainder of the company destroys the enemy vehicles. The platoon continues to execute the selected or refined COA until it accomplishes the original mission, receives a FRAGO from the company commander changing the mission or COA, or receives a new order to consolidate and reorganize on the objective.

EXAMPLE: As the platoon maneuvers to destroy what appears to be a combat security outpost with one BMP-3 and an infantry squad, it discovers that the outpost is actually manned by a reinforced motorized rifle platoon (MRP) (three BMP-3s and one T-80U). The platoon leader must analyze and develop the new situation. He reports to the company commander that the enemy is more than the platoon can handle and recommends an alternate course of

action, such as establishing a support-by-fire position to suppress the enemy while the remainder of the company bounds forward to destroy the reinforced MRP.

Section V. PLATOON OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Platoons and squads conduct an attack as part of the SBCT infantry rifle company. An attack requires detailed planning, synchronization and rehearsals to be successful. The company commander designates platoon objectives with a task and purpose for his assault, support, and breach elements. To ensure synchronization, all leaders must know the location of their subordinates and adjacent units during the attack. In addition to having different forms based on their purposes (refer to Section VII), attacks are characterized as hasty or deliberate. The primary difference between them is the extent of planning and preparation conducted by the attacking force, but there is no clear distinction between hasty and deliberate attacks. Attacks may take the form of one of the following:

- Force-oriented attacks against a stationary enemy force.
- Force-oriented attacks against a moving enemy force.
- Terrain-oriented attacks.

4-20. DELIBERATE ATTACK

Most often, the platoon conducts either a hasty attack or a deliberate attack with the only difference being the level of detailed planning and preparation. Platoons and squads conduct deliberate attacks as part of a larger force. The commander may designate separate platoon objectives for his assault, support, and breach elements, resulting in decentralized execution at all levels. SBCT forces can conduct deliberate attacks dismounted throughout the operation or can use the ICVs to conduct movement to the assault position. This decision is situation dependent. The phases of the deliberate attack are reconnaissance, movement to the objective, isolate the objective, seize a foothold, and exploit.

    a. **Reconnaissance.** Before a deliberate attack, the platoon and company should gain enemy and friendly information from the reconnaissance conducted by the RSTA squadron or the battalion reconnaissance platoon. However, this may not always occur. The platoon and company should be prepared to conduct a reconnaissance of the objective to confirm, modify, or deny their tentative plan.

    (1) Platoons should not conduct reconnaissance unless specifically tasked to do so in a consolidated reconnaissance plan. If possible, the company should determine the enemy's size, location, disposition, most vulnerable point, and most probable course of action. At this point, and with permission from battalion, the company should direct the platoon to conduct a reconnaissance patrol. This element conducts a reconnaissance of the terrain along the axis of advance and on the objective. It determines where the enemy is most vulnerable to attack and where the support element can best place fires on the objective.

    (2) The tentative plan may change as a result of the reconnaissance if the platoon or squad discovers that terrain or enemy dispositions are different than determined earlier in the troop-leading procedures. The platoon or squad leader may modify graphic control measures based on the results of the reconnaissance and must send these adjustments as

soon as possible. For example, the platoon may discover that the ICVs and the weapons squad cannot suppress the enemy from the north side of the objective as originally planned because of terrain limitations. Therefore, the platoon leader moves the support-by-fire positions to the south side of the objective, adjusts the tentative plan's graphics, and sends the modified graphics to his commander for approval. The graphics are subsequently disseminated throughout the company and to adjacent units as needed.

   b. **Movement to the Objective.** The attacking force advances to within assault distance of the enemy position under supporting fires using a combination of traveling, traveling overwatch, and or bounding overwatch. Platoons advance to successive positions using available cover and concealment. The company commander may designate support-by-fire positions to protect friendly forces with suppressive direct fires. As the company maneuvers in zone, it employs fires to suppress, neutralize, and obscure the enemy positions. The platoon conducts mounted movement to covered and concealed positions and then dismounts. If the platoon is dismounted and moving separately from the ICVs, the platoon concentrates direct and indirect fires, establishes a base of fire, and maneuvers to regain the initiative.

   (1) *Assembly Area to the Line of Departure*. The LD is normally a phase line (or checkpoint) where elements of the attacking force transition to secure movement techniques in preparation for contact with the enemy. Platoons may maneuver from the LD to designated support-by-fire positions, assault positions, or breach or bypass sites. Before leaving the assembly area, the platoon leader should receive a COP update (digital) showing the location of forward and adjacent friendly elements. He should also receive updated enemy locations. The platoon leader then disseminates these reports and digital overlays to each squad leader and VC. The platoon moves forward from the assembly area to the line of departure, usually as part of a company formation, along a planned route. The platoon leader should have reconnoitered the route to the LD and specifically to the crossing point. During the planning stage, he plots a waypoint on the line of departure at the point he intends to cross. The platoon navigates to the waypoint during movement. The move from the assembly area is timed during the reconnaissance so the lead section crosses the LD at the time of attack without halting in the attack position. If the platoon must halt in the attack position, it uses a coil or herringbone formation, dismounts infantry, and takes care of last minute coordination.

   (2) *Line of Departure to Assault Position*. The platoon's assault element moves from the LD to the assault position. The platoon leader plots waypoints to coincide with checkpoints along the route. During movement, he ensures the platoon navigates from checkpoint to checkpoint or phase line by using basic land navigation skills supplemented by precision navigation. The platoon leader verifies his vehicles are in the correct formation for movement.

   (a) By relying on the CTD's position updates at night, the platoon leader does not have to restrict his platoon's dispersion as much, which increases his overall security posture. During movement, the platoon communicates primarily by FM radio and signals (embedded digital reports) because these are faster for the receiving station to understand and faster for the sending station to prepare.

   (b) The platoon dismounts the squads at the dismount point. The vehicles move to a support position. The platoon dismounts in an area providing cover and concealment from enemy observation and direct fire as it assembles and orients itself.

(3) *Assault Position to the Objective.* The assault position is the last covered and concealed position before reaching the objective. Ideally, the platoon's assault element occupies the assault position without the enemy detecting any of the platoon's elements. Preparations in the assault position may include preparing bangalores, other breaching equipment, or demolitions; fixing bayonets; lifting or shifting fires; or preparing smoke pots. The platoon must halt in the assault position to ensure synchronization of friendly forces. Once the assault element moves forward of the assault position, the assault must continue. If stopped or turned back, the assault element could sustain excessive casualties.

(a) Supporting fire from the weapons squad must continue to suppress the enemy and must be closely controlled to prevent fratricide. At times, the assault element may mark each soldier or just the team on the flank nearest the support element. The assaulting soldiers and the support element sustain a high rate of fire to suppress the enemy.

(b) When the assault element moves to the breach point, the base-of-fire leader verifies the assault element is at the right location. The base-of-fire leader is responsible for tracking the assault element as it assaults the objective. The company commander shifts or lifts indirect fire when it endangers the advancing soldiers and coordinates this with the platoons' assaults. As the fire of the platoons' support is masked, the platoon leader shifts or lifts it or displaces the weapons squad and ICVs to a position where continuous fire can be maintained.

c. **Isolate the Objective.** The goals of isolation are to prevent the enemy from reinforcing the objective and to prevent enemy forces on the objective from leaving. Infantry platoons will likely be an isolating force within a company. The platoon leader may use the mounted element to accomplish isolation if the platoon must isolate its own objective. The mounted element by its nature is agile, has significant firepower, has protection from small arms fire, and is led by the platoon sergeant. Using the mounted element for this purpose allows the dismounted element (three infantry squads and a weapons squad) to conduct actions on the objective.

d. **Seize a Foothold and Exploit the Penetration (Actions on the Objective).** The platoon leader often designates assault, support, and breach elements within his platoon to conduct a deliberate attack. One technique is to designate the ICVs as one support element, the seven-man weapons squad as another support element, a nine-man infantry squad as the breach element, and the platoon (-) as the assault element.

(1) The supporting elements support the breach element's initial breach of the objective by placing suppressive fires on the most dangerous enemy positions. The platoon augments the signals it uses to lift or shift fire and to mark the left and right limits of the assault element with their OTN equipment. As the breach is being established, the weapons squad (or mounted element) should shift fires of M240Bs (or local self-defense weapons) to allow the breach element to penetrate the objective without committing fratricide. Visual observation, as well as information provided via the COP, is vital to maintain suppressive fires just forward of the breach and assault elements.

(2) The supporting elements monitor the forward progress of the assault element and keep shifting suppressive fire at a safe distance in front of them. The weapons squad positions itself to provide continual close-in suppressive fire to aid the actions of the assault element as it moves across the objective. The mounted element most likely ceases direct fires.

(3) Once the breach element has seized the initial foothold on the objective, the assault element may then move through the breach lane to assault the objective. As this occurs, the platoon sergeant closely observes the progress of the breach and assault elements to ensure there is no loss in momentum and that assault and breach elements do not cross in front of the supporting elements.

(4) All communication from the mounted support element to the breach, assault, and weapons squads is by FM radio or signals. If the platoon sergeant or weapons squad leader observe problems, they radio the platoon leader. The platoon leader uses this information, the COP, and what he personally sees on the objective to control the assault.

e. **Consolidation and Reorganization.** Once enemy resistance on the objective has ceased, the platoon quickly consolidates to defend against a possible counterattack and prepares for follow-on missions.

(1) Consolidation consists of actions taken to secure the objective and defend against an enemy counterattack. The platoon leader must use the troop-leading procedures to plan and prepare. He ensures the platoon is ready to--

- Eliminate enemy resistance on the objective.
- Establish security beyond the objective by securing areas that may be the source of enemy direct fires or enemy artillery observation.
- Establish additional security measures such as OPs and patrols.
- Prepare for and assist the passage of follow-on forces (if required).
- Continue to improve security by conducting other necessary defensive actions. (These steps, which are outlined in Chapter 5 of this manual, include engagement area development, direct fire planning, and battle position preparation).
- Adjust final protective fire (FPF).
- Secure enemy prisoners of war (EPWs).

(2) Reorganization, normally conducted concurrently with consolidation, consists of actions taken to prepare for follow-on operations. As with consolidation, the platoon leader must plan and prepare for reorganization as he conducts his troop-leading procedures. He ensures the platoon is prepared to--

- Provide essential medical treatment and evacuate casualties as necessary.
- Cross-level personnel and adjust task organization as required.
- Conduct resupply operations, including rearming and refueling.
- Redistribute ammunition.
- Conduct required maintenance.
- Reestablish chain of command.

21. HASTY ATTACK.

The platoon normally participates in a hasty attack as part of a larger unit, during movement to contact, as part of a defense, or whenever the commander determines that the enemy is in a vulnerable position and can be quickly defeated by immediate offensive action. A hasty attack is used to--

- Exploit a tactical opportunity.
- Maintain the momentum.
- Regain the initiative.

- Prevent the enemy from regaining organization or balance.
- Gain a favorable position that may be lost with time.

Because its primary purpose is to maintain momentum or take advantage of the enemy situation, the hasty attack is normally conducted with only the resources that are immediately available. Maintaining unrelenting pressure through hasty attacks keeps the enemy off balance and makes it difficult for him to react effectively. Rapidly attacking before the enemy can act often results in success even when the combat power ratio is not as favorable as desired. With its emphasis on agility and surprise, however, this type of attack may cause the attacking force to lose a degree of synchronization. To minimize this risk, the commander should maximize use of standard formations; well-rehearsed, thoroughly understood battle drills and SOPs; and digital tools that facilitate rapid planning and preparation. By maintaining an awareness of the enemy and friendly situation, and assigning on-order and be-prepared missions to subordinate companies as the situation warrants, the platoon is better able to transition into hasty attacks. The hasty attack is often the preferred option during continuous operations. It allows the commander to maintain the momentum of friendly operations while denying the enemy the time needed to prepare his defenses and to recover from losses suffered during previous action. Hasty attacks normally result from a movement to contact, successful defense, or continuation of a previous attack.

a. **Task Organization.** The hasty attack is conducted using the principles of fire and movement. The controlling headquarters normally designates a base of fire force and a maneuver force.

b. **Conduct of the Hasty Attack.** The platoon must first conduct actions on contact, allowing the commander to gather the information he needs to make an informed decision. The term "hasty" refers to limits on planning and preparation time, not to any acceleration in the conduct of actions on contact. Because the intelligence picture is vague, the commander normally needs more time, rather than less, during this process to gain adequate information about the enemy force.

(1) Execution begins with establishment of a base of fire, which then suppresses the enemy force. The maneuver force uses a combination of techniques to maintain its security as it advances in contact to a position of advantage. These techniques include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Use of internal base of fire and bounding elements.
- Use of covered and concealed routes.
- Use of indirect fires to suppress or obscure the enemy or to screen friendly movement.
- Execution of bold maneuver that initially takes the maneuver force out of enemy direct fire range.

(2) Once the maneuver force has gained the positional advantage, it can execute a tactical task such as assault to destroy the remaining enemy.

Section VI. OTHER OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

This section focuses on offensive operations that the platoon normally conducts as part of an SBCT infantry company or larger element: movement to contact, exploitation, and pursuit.

4-22. MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

Platoons and squads participate in a movement to contact as part of a company using movement formations and techniques explained in Chapter 3. A company generally conducts a movement to contact when it must gain or maintain contact with the enemy or when it lacks sufficient time to gain intelligence or make extensive plans to defeat the enemy. Infantry units prefer not to conduct movement to contact. In the SBCT, the RSTA squadron and the battalion reconnaissance platoon should find the enemy through reconnaissance and surveillance, but this is not always possible. Battalions may task or allow companies to gather intelligence through reconnaissance and surveillance if the company commander needs to develop further the intelligence picture. In this case, the company tasks a platoon or squad to conduct reconnaissance, surveillance, or both. If the company or platoon is operating independently, then it must conduct needed reconnaissance.

4-23. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The company commander will not have a complete visualization of the situation. The leader's role is to gain as much first hand information as possible. That combined with information on the enemy and the terrain provides the knowledge and understanding necessary to respond to the enemy. However, if the enemy situation remains vague, the platoon must be prepared to act in any situation. This is accomplished through proper planning, appropriate movement formations and techniques, fire control measures, platoon SOPs, engagement criteria, and studying the terrain before and during movement to anticipate likely enemy locations. While moving, all leaders study the terrain and anticipate enemy contact. The platoon leader may not know when or where he will make contact with the enemy and should avoid mounted movement on terrain restricting maneuver (such as draws, ravines, narrow trails, or steep slopes). If restrictive terrain is unavoidable, the platoon leader dismounts the rifle squads to enhance security in restrictive areas.

a. **Techniques.** Infantry platoons will participate in two techniques for conducting a movement to contact: approach march or search and attack. The approach march technique is used when the enemy is expected to deploy using relatively fixed offensive or defensive formations but the situation remains vague. The search and attack technique is used when the enemy is dispersed, when he is expected to avoid contact or quickly disengage and withdraw, or when the higher unit needs to deny him movement in an AO.

b. **Command and Control.** The company commander will dictate a number of command and control techniques for the unit to employ. The platoon leader, within the scope of the commander's intent and guidance and the factors of METT-TC, may modify these techniques in order to control better his sections and squads. Some examples of command and control techniques are discussed below:

(1) *Line of Departure, Phase Lines, and Checkpoints.* The company commander will normally assign lines of departure, phase lines, and checkpoints to control the forward movement of the platoon. The platoon does not stop at a phase line unless told to do so. If necessary, the platoon leader designates additional phase lines or checkpoints for use within the platoon to reduce the number and length of radio transmissions used to control movement.

(2) *Fire Control and Distribution.* The platoon uses boundaries, direct fire plans, pyrotechnics, signals, and FRAGOs for direct fire control and distribution. (For a detailed discussion of direct fire control and distribution refer to Appendix F.) The variety of weapons in the infantry platoon makes it critical for all squads and sections to understand the observation plan and the designated sectors of fire during an MTC. This takes on importance because of the scarcity of information about the enemy.

(3) *Indirect Fire Plan.* The platoon leader must have a good indirect fire plan for his route to cover anticipated places of contact. These targets are a product of the platoon leader's analysis of the factors of METT-TC and must be incorporated into the company indirect fire plan. The platoon leader, platoon sergeant, section leaders, or squad leaders may initiate the calls for fire.

c. **Developing the situation.** Once the platoon makes contact with the enemy, it maintains contact until the commander orders otherwise. The platoon leader develops the situation based on the effectiveness of enemy fire, friendly casualties, size of enemy force, and freedom to maneuver. He gathers and reports critical information about the enemy and recommends a course of action. The platoon can bypass the enemy with permission from the commander, conduct an attack, fix the enemy so another platoon can conduct the assault, conduct a defense, establish an ambush, or break contact. The following guidelines apply for the platoon to develop the situation after making contact.

(1) Light resistance is resistance from an enemy element, squad-sized or smaller, that is not inflicting friendly casualties; is not equipped with an armored vehicle, machineguns, or antiarmor assets; and is occupying hasty fighting positions with no tactical obstacles.

(a) Light resistance may be bypassed IAW the order or when directed by the company commander. Once the platoon reacts to contact and the leader makes the decision to bypass, the following actions occur:

- ICVs suppress the enemy and continue to move.
- Rifle squads remain mounted.
- Platoon leader calls for and adjusts indirect fire and smoke to screen his movement past the enemy position.
- Platoon leader reports the size, activity, and location of the enemy to the company commander, and the platoon continues the mission.

(b) When the platoon reacts to contact and decides to conduct an attack against light resistance, the actions are:

- Squads dismount in covered and concealed locations.
- Weapons squad and or ICVs provide long-range supporting fires from a covered position.
- Platoon leader calls for and adjusts indirect fire to suppress the enemy.
- Rifle squads maneuver, supported by the fires of the weapons squad and or ICVs, to destroy the enemy.
- Platoon conducts consolidation and reorganization, if required.
- Platoon leader reports the status and continues the mission.

(2) Medium resistance is resistance from an enemy squad- to platoon-sized element that is inflicting friendly casualties. The enemy defense is organized around the best defensible terrain with integrated combined arms assets. The platoon reacts to medium resistance using the following actions:

- ICVs move to a covered and concealed position to dismount the squads.
- Platoon leader calls for and adjusts indirect fires to suppress the enemy and obscure movement with smoke.
- Weapons squad, rifle squads, and ICVs, or a combination of these, immediately suppress the enemy from a covered position and continue to suppress while the assault element moves to the objective. The support element keeps fires in front of the assault element as they conduct the assault.
- The rifle squads conduct the assault using fire and movement. One squad supports by fire while the other two squads move. The platoon leader moves with the squads conducting the assault to control the movement and adjust or control all supporting fires.
- Once the assault element seizes the objective (or destroys the enemy) and begins consolidation, the platoon leader calls the ICVs forward.
- The platoon conducts consolidation and reorganization.

(3) Heavy resistance is resistance from an enemy platoon-sized element or larger that is inflicting heavy friendly casualties. The enemy is defending a strongpoint with combined arms assets. If a bypass or attack is not possible, the company commander may instruct the platoon to fix the enemy. Fixing the enemy involves establishing a base-of-fire to prevent the enemy from repositioning any part of his force for use elsewhere. When enemy resistance is too heavy for the platoon to assault or an attack has failed, the actions of the platoon are as follow:

- The platoon suppresses from support-by-fire positions to support the company (-) maneuver.
- The platoon leader calls for and adjusts indirect fires to suppress the enemy.
- The platoon prepares to lift or shift fires as other platoons conduct the assault.
- Depending on the company formation and order of movement, platoons must be prepared to provide support by fire for another platoon while it conducts the assault, or to conduct the assault while other platoons support by fire.
- If more than one platoon is involved, the commander issues instructions for direct fire control and distribution to the platoon leader. The platoon leader then controls the platoon fires.

d. **Defensive Considerations.** In some situations, a platoon conducting a MTC makes contact with a much larger and more powerful enemy force. If the platoon encounters a larger enemy force where the terrain gives the platoon an advantage, it should attempt to fix the enemy force. This allows the rest of the company to maneuver against the force. If the platoon cannot fix the enemy, it may have to assume a defensive posture (refer to Chapter 5) or break contact. Because the defense may surrender the initiative to the enemy and means the enemy has fixed the platoon in place, the platoon should use it only if it is in danger of being overwhelmed. Exposed rifle squads are vulnerable to enemy indirect fires. If the platoon receives indirect fire during movement, it should use the protection of the ICVs and attempt to move out of the area or find a covered position for the rifle squads to dismount. Once the indirect fires cease, the platoon prepares for an enemy assault. In the defense, the platoon leader--

- Keeps the company commander informed and continues to report on enemy strength, dispositions, and activities.
- Dismounts the squads to cover dismounted avenues of approach in preparation for the enemy's attack.
- Places ICVs in hull-down positions (if available) or positions that provide the best cover and concealment.
- Orients Javelins along mounted avenues of approach.
- Establishes direct fire control and distribution measures.
- Calls for and adjusts indirect fires.

4-24. APPROACH MARCH TECHNIQUE

The approach march is one of the methods of troop movement (*administrative movement, tactical road march*, and *approach march*). The approach march is the advance of a combat unit when direct contact with the enemy is intended. The concept behind the approach march as a technique for MTC is to make contact with the smallest element, allowing the commander the flexibility of maneuvering or bypassing the enemy force. During an approach march, the company commander will organize his unit into two elements (advance guard and main body). As part of a company using the approach march technique, platoons may act as the advance guard, the flank or rear guard, or they also may receive on-order missions as part of the main body.

a. **Advance Guard.** The advance guard operates forward of the main body to ensure its uninterrupted advance. It protects the main body from surprise attack and fixes the enemy to protect the deployment of the main body. As the advance guard, the platoon finds the enemy and locates gaps, flanks, and weaknesses in his defense. The advance guard attempts to make contact on ground of its own choosing, to gain the advantage of surprise, and to develop the situation (either fight through or support the assault of all or part of the main body). The advance guard operates within the range of indirect fire support weapons. The platoon uses appropriate formations and movement techniques based on the factors of METT-TC.

b. **Flank or Rear Guard.** The platoon will have the responsibilities of flank or rear guard when moving within the company main body; however, the platoon may act as the flank or rear guard for a battalion conducting a movement to contact using approach march technique. In either situation, the platoon:

- Moves using the appropriate formation and movement technique. (It must maintain the same momentum as the main body.)
- Provides early warning.
- Destroys enemy reconnaissance units.
- Prevents direct fires or observation of the main body.

c. **Main Body.** When moving as part of the main body, platoons may be tasked to assault, bypass, or fix an enemy force or to seize, secure, or clear an assigned area. The platoon also may be detailed to provide sections as flank or rear guards, stay-behind ambushes, or additional security to the front. Platoons, squads and sections use appropriate formations and movement, assault, and ambush techniques.

4-25. SEARCH AND ATTACK TECHNIQUE

The search and attack is a technique conducted when the enemy is operating as small, dispersed elements, or when the task is to deny the enemy the ability to move within a given AO. The platoon will participate as part of company or battalion search and attack. A unit conducts a search and attack for one or more of the following reasons:

- Render the enemy in the AO combat-ineffective.
- Prevent the enemy from operating unhindered in a given AO.
- Prevent the enemy from massing to disrupt or destroy friendly military or civilian operations, equipment, or facilities.
- Gain information about the enemy and the terrain.

a. **Organization of Forces.** The higher commander will task organize the subordinate units into reconnaissance, fixing, and finishing forces. He will assign specific tasks and purposes to his search and attack forces. Planning considerations for organizing include:

- The factors of METT-TC.
- The requirement for decentralized execution.
- The requirement for mutual support. (The platoon leader must be able to respond to contact with his rifle squads or his mounted sections not in contact, or to mutually support another platoon within the company.)
- Mounted or dismounted.
- The soldier's load.
- Resupply and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC).
- The employment of key weapons.
- The requirement for patrol bases.

(1) *Reconnaissance Force.* The size and composition of the reconnaissance force is based on the available information on the size and activity of the enemy operating in the designate AO. The reconnaissance force typically consists of the battalion reconnaissance platoon. However, an infantry platoon also may comprise all or part of the reconnaissance force. The platoon will reconnoiter identified named areas of interest. The platoon leader may also identify fixing and finishing elements within the platoon.

(2) *Fixing Force.* The fixing force must have sufficient combat power to isolate the enemy and develop the situation once the reconnaissance force finds him. When developing the situation, the fixing force either continues to maintain visual contact with the enemy until the finishing force arrives or conducts an attack to physically fix the enemy until the finishing force arrives. The platoon leader also may identify a finishing element within the platoon.

(a) The platoon maintains visual contact to allow the reconnaissance force to continue to other named areas of interest, and it isolates the immediate area. The fixing force makes physical contact only if the enemy attempts to leave the area or other enemy elements enter the area.

(b) The platoon attacks the enemy if that action meets the commander's intent and if he has sufficient combat power to destroy the enemy.

(3) *Finishing Force.* The finishing force must have sufficient combat power to destroy enemy forces located within the AO. The finishing force must be mobile and responsive enough to engage the enemy before he can break contact with the

reconnaissance or fixing forces. A platoon, as the finishing force, may be tasked to conduct the following:

- Destroy the enemy with an attack.
- Block enemy escape routes while another company conducts the attack.
- Destroy the enemy with an ambush while the reconnaissance or fixing forces drive the enemy toward the ambush location.

b. **Control Measures.** The higher commander will establish control measures that allow for decentralized execution and platoon leader initiative to the greatest extent possible. The minimum control measures for a search and attack are:

- Areas of operation.
- Target reference points.
- Objectives.
- Checkpoints.
- Contact points.

An AO defines the location in which the subordinate units will conduct their searches. A target reference point (TRP) facilitates the responsiveness of the fixing and finishing forces once the reconnaissance force detects the enemy. A TRP also assists in avoiding fratricide in what may be a confusing, noncontiguous environment. Objectives and checkpoints guide the movement of subordinates and help leaders control their organizations. Contact points aid coordination among the units operating within the same AO. The advance guard operates forward of the main body to ensure its uninterrupted advance. It protects the main body from surprise attack and fixes the enemy to protect the deployment of the main body. As the advance guard, the platoon finds the enemy and locates gaps, flanks, and weaknesses in his defense. The advance guard attempts to make contact on ground of its own choosing, to gain the advantage of surprise, and to develop the situation (either fight through or support the assault of all or part of the main body). The advance guard operates within the range of indirect fire support weapons. The platoon uses appropriate formations and movement techniques based on the factors of METT-TC.

4-26. EXPLOITATION

A platoon normally takes part in exploitations as part of a larger force; however, the platoon should exploit tactical success at the local level within the higher commanders' concept of the operation.

4-27. PURSUIT

The objective of the pursuit phase of an operation is the total destruction of the enemy force. The SBCT infantry platoon may take part in a pursuit as part of a larger force or, because of its organic transportation, may participate as part of a task-organized company acting as a pursuit force that can close with and destroy the remnants of the enemy force.

4-28. ATTACKS DURING LIMITED VISIBILITY

Effective use of digitized and OTN equipment during limited visibility attacks enhances squad and platoon ability to achieve surprise and cause panic in a lesser-equipped enemy. OTN enhancements allow the infantry soldier to see farther and with greater clarity. The

OTN enhancements and increased friendly and enemy information afford a marked advantage over the enemy.

a. Leaders have an increased ability to control fires during limited visibility. The platoon has three types of enhancements for use in fire control--target designators consisting of the GCP-1 and AIM-1; aiming lights consisting of the AIM-1 and AN/PAQ-4B/C; and target illuminators consisting of infrared parachute flares, infrared trip flares, infrared 40-mm rounds, infrared mortar rounds, infrared bike lights, and remote black lights. These assets greatly aid in target acquisition and fire control.

b. Soldiers with OTN enhancements have greater accuracy of fires during limited visibility. Each soldier in the SBCT platoon is equipped with an AN/PAQ-4B/C aiming light for his individual weapon. The AN/PAQ-4B/C enables the rifleman to put infrared light on the target at the point of aim.

(1) Leaders can designate targets with greater precision using the GCP-1 and AIM-1. The GCP-1 and AIM-1 are infrared laser pointers that place an infrared light to designate targets and sectors of fire and concentrate fire. The leader lases a target and directs his soldiers to place their fires on the target. The soldiers then use the aiming lights on their AN/PAQ-4B/Cs to engage the target.

(2) Leaders also can designate larger targets using target illuminators. Target illuminators are essentially infrared light sources that light the target, making it easier to acquire effectively. Target illuminators consist of infrared illumination rounds, infrared M203 40-mm rounds, infrared trip flares, and infrared parachute flares. Leaders and soldiers use the infrared devices to identify enemy or friendly personnel and then engage targets using their aiming lights.

c. The platoon leader, squad leaders, and VCs must develop SOPs and sound courses of action to synchronize the employment of infrared illumination devices, target designators, and aiming lights during their assault on the objective.

(1) Leaders use luminous tape or chemical lights to mark assault personnel to prevent fratricide. The enemy must not be able to see the marking. Two techniques are to place tape on the back of the helmet or to use small infrared chemical lights (if the enemy has no night vision devices [NVDs]). The supporting elements must know where the lead assault element is.

(2) To reduce the risk to the assault element, the platoon leader may assign weapons control restrictions. For example, the squad on the right in the assault might be given "weapons free" to the right flank because no friendly soldiers are there. However, "weapons tight" or "weapons hold" on the left means that another friendly unit is located there.

(3) The platoon leader may use the following techniques to increase control during the assault:

- Using no flares, grenades, or smoke on the objective.
- Only certain personnel with NVDs to engage targets on the objective.
- A magnetic azimuth for maintaining direction.
- Mortar or artillery rounds to orient attacking units.
- A base squad or fire team to pace and guide others.
- Reduced intervals between soldiers and squads.

d. Mortar, artillery, and antiarmor fires are planned as in a daylight attack. However, they are not fired unless the platoon is detected or is ready to assault. Some weapons may

fire before the attack and maintain a pattern to deceive the enemy or to help cover noise made by the platoon's movement. This is not done if it will disclose the attack.

(1) Indirect fire is hard to adjust when visibility is poor. If the exact location of friendly units is not clearly known, indirect fire is directed first at enemy positions beyond the objective and then moved onto the objective.

(2) Illuminating rounds that are fired to burn on the ground can be used to mark objectives. This helps the platoon orient on the objective but also may adversely affect NVDs.

e. Smoke is planned to further reduce the enemy's visibility, particularly if he has NVDs. The smoke is laid close to or on enemy positions so it does not restrict friendly movement or hinder the breaching of obstacles. Employing smoke on the objective during the assault may make it hard for assaulting soldiers to find enemy fighting positions. If enough thermal sights are available, smoke on the objective may provide a decisive advantage for a well-trained platoon.

f. Illumination is always planned for limited visibility attacks, giving the leader the option of calling for it. Battalion commanders normally control the use of conventional illumination but may authorize the company commander to do so. If the commander decides to use conventional illumination, he should not call for it until the assault is initiated or the attack is detected. It should be placed on several locations over a wide area to confuse the enemy as to the exact place of the attack. Also, it should be placed beyond the objective to help assaulting soldiers see and fire at withdrawing or counterattacking enemy soldiers

NOTE: If the enemy is equipped with NVDs, leaders must evaluate the risk of using each technique and ensure the mission is not compromised because the enemy can detect infrared light sources.

Section VII. SPECIAL PURPOSE ATTACKS

The platoon will conduct a special attack at the direction of the company commander. The commander will base his decision on the factors of METT-TC. Special purpose attacks are subordinate forms of an attack and they include--

- Ambush.
- Raid.
- Counterattack.
- Spoiling attack.
- Feint.
- Demonstration.

As forms of the attack, they share many of the same planning, preparation, and execution considerations of the offense. Feints and demonstrations are also associated with military deception operations.

4-29. AMBUSH

An ambush is a form of attack by fire or other destructive means from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy. It may take the form of an assault to close with and destroy the enemy, or it may be an attack-by-fire only, executed from concealed positions. An ambush does not require that ground be seized or held.

Ambushes are generally executed to reduce the enemy force's overall combat effectiveness. Destruction is the primary reason for conducting an ambush. Other reasons to conduct ambushes are to harass the enemy, capture the enemy, destroy or capture enemy equipment, and to gain information about the enemy. Ambushes are classified by *category* (deliberate or hasty), *formation* (linear or L-shaped), and *type* (point, area, or antiarmor). The platoon leader uses a combination of category, type, and formation for developing his ambush plan.

a. **Operational Considerations.** The execution of an ambush is offensive in nature; however, the platoon may be directed to conduct an ambush during offensive or defensive operations. The platoon leader considers both mounted and dismounted options for conducting the ambush. The platoon must take all necessary precautions to ensure that it is not detected during movement to or preparation of the ambush site. The platoon also must have a secure route of withdrawal following the ambush. An ambush normally consists of the following actions:

- Mounted (or dismounted) tactical movement to the objective rally point (ORP).
- Reconnaissance of the ambush site.
- Establishment of the ambush security site.
- Preparation of the ambush site.
- Execution of the ambush.
- Withdrawal.

b. **Task Organization.** The platoon is normally task-organized into assault, support, and security forces for execution of the ambush.

(1) *Assault Force.* The assault force executes the ambush. It may employ an attack by fire, an assault, or a combination of those techniques to destroy the ambushed enemy force. The assault force generally will consist of a rifle squad. The platoon leader normally will be located with the assault force.

(2) *Support Force.* The support force fixes the enemy force to prevent it from moving out of the kill zone, allowing the assault force to conduct the ambush. The support force generally uses direct fires in this role, but it may be responsible for calling indirect fires to further fix the ambushed enemy force. The support force generally will consist of the weapons squad. The platoon sergeant normally will be located with the support force.

(3) *Security Force.* The security force provides protection and early warning to the assault and support forces and secures the ORP. It isolates the ambush site both to prevent the ambushed enemy force from moving out of the ambush site and to prevent enemy rescue elements from reaching the ambush site. The security force also may be responsible for securing the platoon's withdrawal route. The security force will generally consist of a rifle squad and the mounted sections. However, the factors of METT-TC may determine that ICVs be employed in the assault or support forces.

c. **Planning.** The platoon leader's key planning considerations for any ambush include:

- Cover the entire kill zone (engagement area) by fire.
- Use existing terrain features (rocks or fallen trees, for example) or reinforcing obstacles (Claymores or other mines) orienting into the kill zone to keep the enemy in the kill zone.

- Determine how to emplace reinforcing obstacles on the far side of the kill zone.
- Protect the assault and support forces with mines, Claymores, or explosives.
- Use the security force to isolate the kill zone.
- Establish rear security behind the assault force.
- Assault into the kill zone to search dead and wounded, assemble prisoners, and collect equipment. (The assault force must be able to move quickly on its own through protective obstacles.)
- Time the actions of all elements of the platoon to preclude the loss of surprise.
- Determine the role of the ICVs as dictated by the factors of METT-TC.

NOTE: When manning an ambush for long periods of time, the platoon leader may use only one squad to conduct the entire ambush, rotating squads over time. The platoon leader must consider the factors of METT-TC, especially the company commander's intent and guidance.

d. **Category.** The leader determines the category of ambush through an analysis of the factors of METT-TC. Typically, the two most important factors are time and enemy.

(1) *Deliberate.* A deliberate ambush is a planned offensive action conducted against a specific target for a specific purpose at a predetermined location. The leader requires detailed information on the following when planning a deliberate ambush:

- Size and composition of the targeted enemy unit.
- Weapons and equipment available to the enemy.
- The enemy's route and direction of movement.
- Times that the targeted enemy unit will reach or pass specified points along the route.

(2) *Hasty.* The platoon (or squad) conducts a hasty ambush when it makes visual contact with an enemy force and has time to establish an ambush without being detected. The conduct of the hasty ambush should represent the execution of disciplined initiative within the parameters of the commander's intent. The actions for a hasty ambush should be established in a unit SOP and rehearsed so that soldiers know what to do on the leader's signal.

e. **Formations.** The platoon leader considers the factors of METT-TC to determine the required formation.

(1) *Linear.* In an ambush using a linear formation, the assault and support forces deploy parallel to the enemy's route (Figure 4-5). This positions both forces on the long axis of the kill zone and subjects the enemy to flanking fire. This formation can be used in close terrain that restricts the enemy's ability to maneuver against the platoon or in open terrain provided a means of keeping the enemy in the kill zone can be effected.
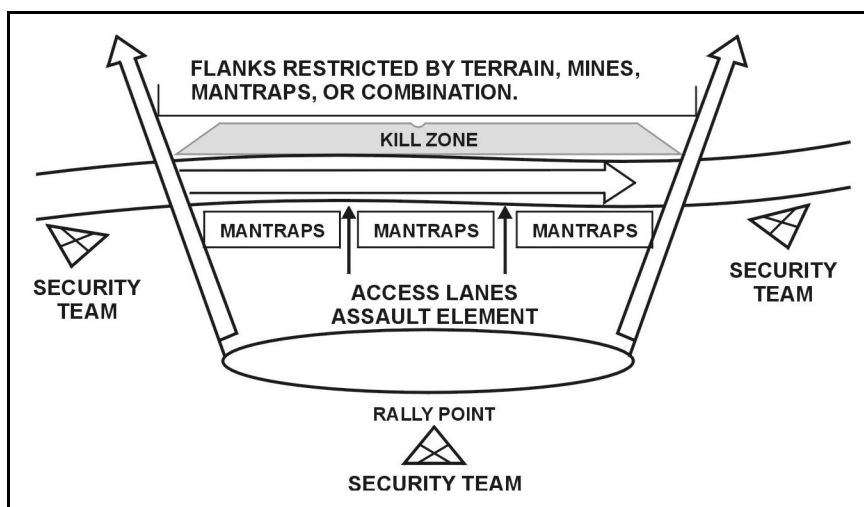
Figure 4-5. Linear ambush formation.

(2) *L-shaped.* In an L-shaped ambush (Figure 4-6), the assault force forms the long leg parallel to the enemy's direction of movement along the kill zone. The support force forms the short leg at one end of and at right angles to the assault force. This provides both flanking (long leg) and enfilading fires (short leg) against the enemy. The L-shaped ambush can be used at a sharp bend in a road, trail, or stream. It should not be used where the short leg would have to cross a straight road or trail. The platoon leader must consider the other factors of METT-TC before opting for the L-shaped formation.
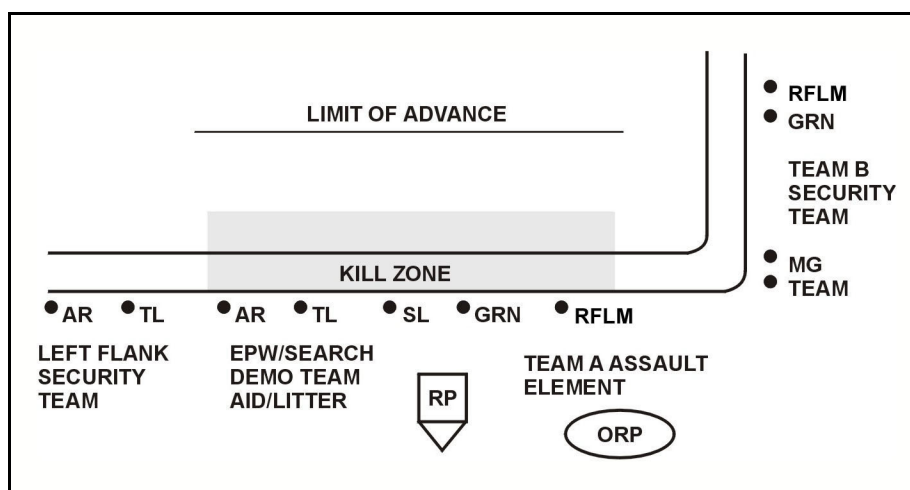
Figure 4-6. L-shaped ambush formation.

f. **Type.** The company commander, following an analysis of the factors of METT-TC, will determine the type of ambush that the platoon will employ.

(1) *Point.* In a point ambush, soldiers deploy to attack an enemy in a single kill zone. The platoon leader should consider the following sequence of actions when planning a point ambush.

(a) The security or surveillance team(s) should be positioned first. The support force should be in position before the assault force moves forward. The support force must overwatch the movement of the assault force into position.

(b) The platoon leader is the leader of the assault force. He must check each soldier once he emplaces. The platoon leader signals the surveillance team to rejoin the assault force if it is positioned away from the assault location. If the platoon leader does not employ the ICVs as part of the security force, the platoon sergeant likely will locate with the platoon leader in the assault force, leaving the mounted sections under the control of the platoon master gunner (Section A leader). The actions of the assault force, support force, and security force are shown in Table 4-1.

ASSAULT FORCE	SUPPORT FORCE	SECURITY FORCE
• Identify individual sectors of fire assigned by the platoon leader; emplace aiming stakes. • Emplace Claymores and other protective obstacles. • Emplace Claymores, mines, or other explosives in dead space within the kill zone. • Camouflage positions. • Take weapons off SAFE, when directed by the platoon leader.	• Identify sectors of fire for all weapons, especially machine guns • Emplace limiting stakes to prevent friendly fires from hitting the assault force in an L-shaped ambush. • Emplace Claymores and other protective obstacles. • Camouflage positions.	• Identify sectors of fire for all weapons; emplace aiming stakes. • Emplace Claymores and other protective obstacles. • Camouflage positions. • Secure the ORP. • Secure route to ORP, as required.

Table 4-1. Actions by ambush forces.

(c) The platoon leader instructs the security force (or teams) to notify him of the enemy's approach into the kill zone using the SALUTE reporting format. The security force also must keep the platoon leader informed if any enemy forces are following the lead enemy force, allowing the platoon leader to know if the enemy force meets the engagement criteria directed by the company commander. The platoon leader must be prepared to let enemy forces pass that are too large or that do not meet the engagement criteria. He must report to the company commander any enemy forces that pass through the ambush unengaged.

(d) The platoon leader initiates the ambush with the greatest casualty-producing weapon, typically a command-detonated Claymore. He also must plan a back-up method to initiate the ambush should the primary means fail, typically an M240B machine gun. All soldiers in the ambush must know the primary and back-up methods. The platoon should rehearse with both methods to avoid confusion and the loss of surprise during execution of the ambush.

(e) The platoon leader must include a plan for engaging the enemy during limited visibility. Based on the company commander's guidance, the platoon leader should consider the use and mix of tracers and the employment of illumination (hand held or indirect fire systems using infrared [IR]). As little light as possible is preferred. For

example, if Javelins are not used during the ambush, the platoon leader may still employ the CLU with its thermal sights in the security or support force to observe enemy forces.

(f) The platoon leader also may include the employment of indirect fire support in his plan. Based on the company commander's guidance, the platoon leader may employ indirect fires to cover flanks of the kill zone to isolate an enemy force or assist the platoon to disengage if the ambush is compromised or the platoon must depart the ambush site under pressure.

(g) The platoon leader must have a good plan (day and night) to signal the advance of the assault force into the kill zone to begin its search and collection activities. He should take into consideration the existing environmental factors. For example, smoke may not be visible to the support force because of limited visibility or the lay of the terrain. All soldiers must know and practice relaying the signal during rehearsals.

(h) The assault force must be prepared to move across the kill zone using individual movement techniques if there is any return fire once they begin to search. Otherwise, the assault force moves across by bounding fire teams.

(i) The assault force collects and secures all EPWs and moves them out of the kill zone to an established location before searching bodies. The EPW collection point should provide cover, but should not be easily found by enemy forces following the ambush. The assault force searches from far side of the kill zone to the near side, marking bodies that have been searched to ensure thoroughness and speed.

(j) Search teams (two-man teams) approach a dead enemy soldier. One man will guard while the other searches. First, the search man will kick the enemy weapon away. Second, he rolls the body over (if on the stomach) by lying on top and when given the go ahead by the guard (who is positioned at the enemy's head, perpendicular to the search man), the search man rolls the body over on him. This is done for protection in case the enemy soldier has a grenade with the pin pulled or other demolition device underneath him. Third, the search man conducts a systematic search of the dead enemy soldier from head to toe, removing all papers and anything of intelligence value (different type of rank, shoulder board, different unit insignia, pistol, weapon, or other special equipment). The guard annotates all of this information. Once the body has been thoroughly searched, the search team continues in this manner until all enemy personnel in and near the kill zone have been searched. Enemy bodies should be marked (for example, folded arms over the chest and legs crossed) to avoid duplication of effort.

(k) The platoon identifies and collects equipment to be carried back and prepares it for transport. Weapons are put on safe. The platoon also identifies and collects at a central point the enemy equipment to be destroyed. The demolition team prepares the fuse and awaits the signal to initiate. This is normally the last action performed before departing the ambush site. The flank security force returns to the ORP after the demolition team completes its task. The platoon will treat friendly wounded first and then enemy wounded (time permitting).

(l) The flank security teams may also emplace antiarmor mines after the ambush has been initiated if the enemy is known to have armored vehicles that can quickly reinforce the ambushed enemy force. If a flank security team makes contact, it fights as long as possible without becoming decisively engaged. It uses prearranged signals to inform the platoon leader it is breaking contact. The platoon leader may direct a portion of the support force to assist the security force to break contact.

(m) The platoon leader must plan the withdrawal of the platoon from the ambush site. He considers the following:

- Elements normally withdraw in the reverse order that they established their positions.
- Elements may return to the release point, then to the ORP, depending on the distance between the elements.
- The security force at the ORP must be alert to assist the platoon's return. It maintains security for the ORP while the remainder of the platoon prepares to depart.

(n) Actions back at the ORP include, but are not limited to, accounting for personnel and equipment, stowing captured equipment, first aid (as necessary), and re-mounting the ICVs.

(2) *Area.* In an area ambush, soldiers deploy in two or more related point ambushes. The platoon may conduct an area ambush as part of a company offensive or defensive plan, or it may conduct a point ambush as part of a company area ambush. The platoon leader should consider the following sequence of actions when planning an area ambush.

(a) The platoon is the smallest level to conduct an area ambush (Figure 4-7). Platoons conduct area ambushes where enemy movement is largely restricted to trails or streams.
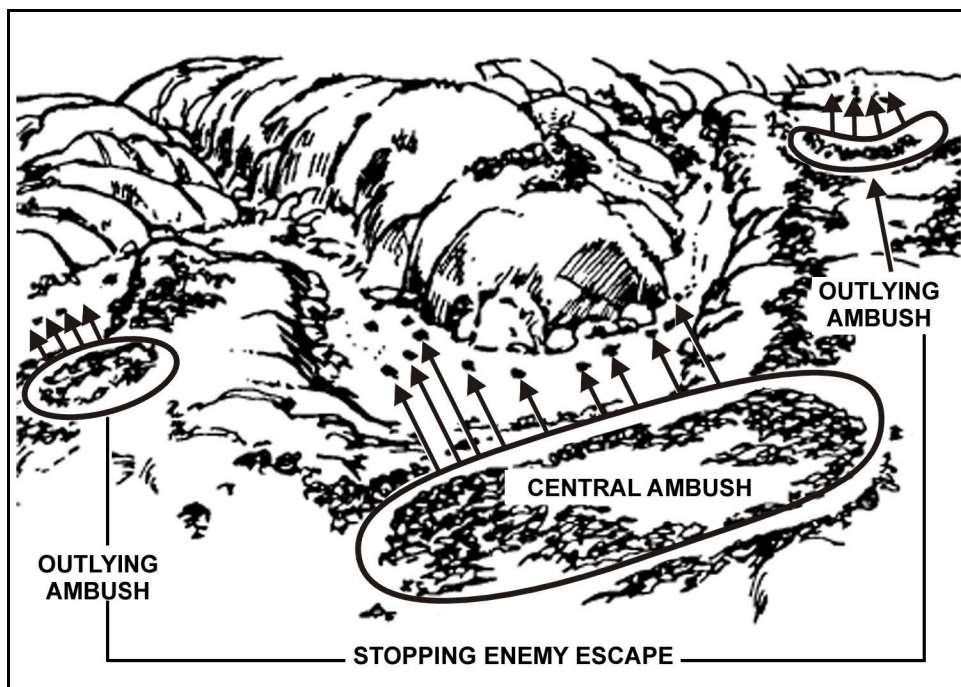
Figure 4-7. Area ambush.

(b) The platoon leader (or company commander) selects one principal ambush site around which he organizes outlying ambushes. These secondary sites are located along the enemy's most likely avenue of approach to and escape from the principal ambush site. Squads are normally responsible for each ambush site.

(c) The platoon leader considers the factors of METT-TC to determine the best employment of the weapons squad, ICVs, and Javelins. He will normally locate the M240Bs with the support force in the principal ambush site.

(d) Squads (or sections) responsible for outlying ambushes do not initiate their ambushes until the principal one has been initiated. They then engage to prevent enemy forces from escaping the principal ambush or reinforcing the ambushed force.

(3) *Antiarmor.* Platoons and squads conduct antiarmor ambushes (Figure 4-8) to destroy one or two armored vehicles. The ambush may be part of an area ambush. The antiarmor ambush consists of the assault force (armor-killer force) and the support-security force. The leader considers the following when planning an antiarmor ambush.
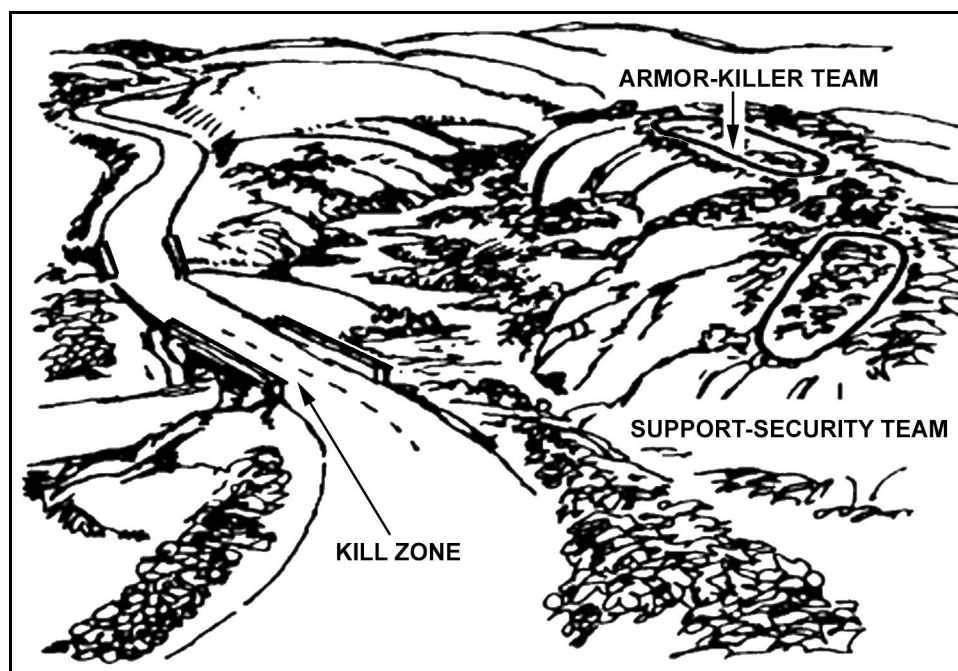

Figure 4-8. Antiarmor ambush.

(a) The armor-killer force is built around the Javelin.(Refer to Appendix G for information about employment of the Javelin.) The leader should consider additional weapons available to supplement the fires. These may include the ICV (MK19) or AT4. The leader considers the factors of METT-TC to position all antiarmor weapons to ensure the best engagement (rear, flank, or top). The remainder of the platoon must function as support and security forces in the same manner as the other types of ambushes.

(b) In a platoon antiarmor ambush, the company commander selects the general site for the ambush. The platoon leader must find a site that restricts the movement of armored vehicles out of the kill zone. The leader should emplace his weapons so that an obstacle is between them and the kill zone. In a squad antiarmor ambush, the platoon leader selects the general site for the ambush. The squad leader then must find a site that restricts the movement of armored vehicles out of the kill zone.

(c) The support-security forces are emplaced to cover dismounted avenues of approach into the ambush site.

(d) The leader should consider the method for initiating the antiarmor ambush. The preferred method is to use a command-detonated antitank (AT) mine placed in the kill zone. The Javelin can be used to initiate the ambush, but even with its limited signature, it may be less desirable than an AT mine.

(e) The armor-killer team destroys the first and last vehicle in the enemy formation, if possible. All other weapons begin firing once the ambush has been initiated.

(f) The leader must determine how the presence of dismounted enemy soldiers with armored vehicles will affect the success of the ambush. The leader's choices include:

- Initiate the ambush as planned.
- Withdraw without initiating the ambush.
- Initiate the ambush with machine guns without firing antiarmor weapons.

(g) Because of the speed with which enemy armored forces can reinforce the ambushed enemy, the leader should plan to keep the engagement short and have a quick withdrawal planned. The platoon, based on the factors of METT-TC, may not clear the kill zone as in the other types of ambushes.

4-30.   RAID

A raid is a limited-objective form of an attack, usually small-scale, entailing swift penetration of hostile territory to secure information, confuse the enemy, or destroy installations. A raid always ends with a planned withdrawal to a friendly location upon completion of the mission. The platoon can conduct an independent raid (mounted or dismounted) in support of the battalion or higher headquarters operation or it can participate as part of the company in a series of raids. Rifle squads do not execute raids; rather, they participate in a platoon raid.

a.   **Operational Considerations.** The platoon may conduct a raid to accomplish a number of missions, including the following:

- Capture prisoners.
- Capture or destroy specific command and control locations.
- Destroy logistical areas.
- Obtain information concerning enemy locations, dispositions, strengths, intentions, or methods of operation.
- Confuse the enemy or disrupt his plans.

b.   **Task Organization.** The task organization of the raiding force is determined by the purpose of the operation. However, the raiding force normally consists of the following elements:

- Support force (with the task of support by fire).
- Assault force (with the task of destroy).
- Breach force (if required).

c.   **Conduct of the Raid.** The main differences between a raid and other special purpose attacks are the limited objectives of the raid and the associated withdrawal following completion. However, the sequence of platoon actions for a raid is very similar to those for an ambush. Additionally, the assault element of the platoon may have to conduct a breach of a protective obstacle (if a breach force has not been designated). Raids may be conducted in daylight or darkness, within or beyond the supporting distances of the parent unit. When the location to be raided is beyond supporting distances of friendly lines, the raiding party operates as a separate force. An objective,

usually very specific in nature, is assigned to orient the raiding unit (Figure 4-9). During the withdrawal, the attacking force should use a route different from that used to conduct the raid itself.
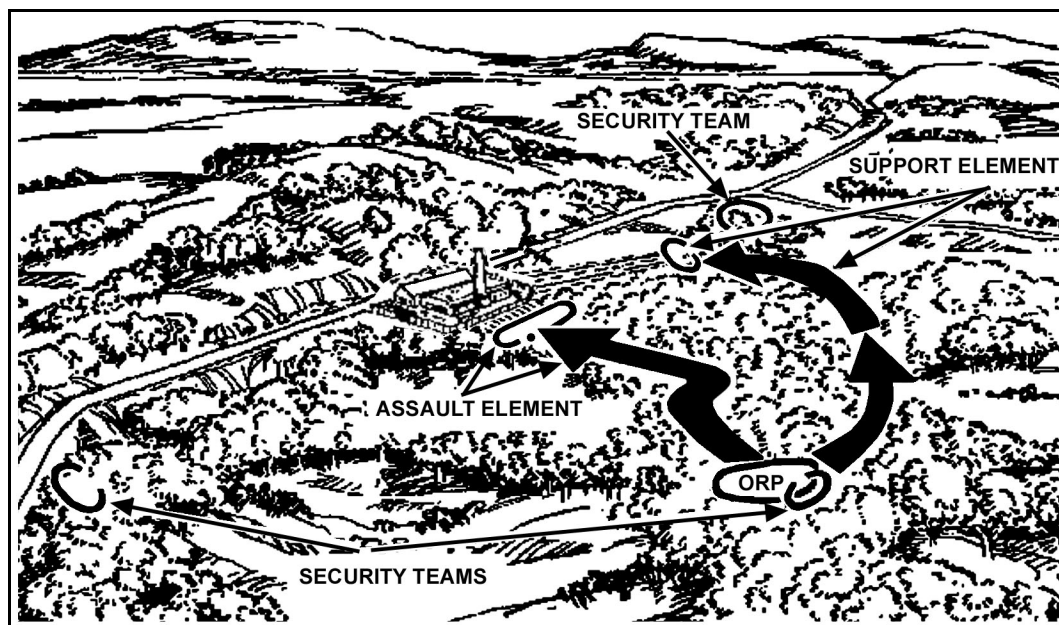
Figure 4-9. Platoon raid.

4-31. COUNTERATTACK

The counterattack is a form of attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force, with the general objective of denying the enemy his goal of attacking. This attack by defensive forces regains the initiative or denies the enemy success with his attack. The platoon may conduct a counterattack as a lightly committed force within a company or as the battalion reserve. The platoon counterattacks after the enemy begins his attack, reveals his main effort, or creates an assailable flank. As part of a higher headquarters, the platoon conducts the counterattack much like other attacks. However, the platoon leader must synchronize the execution of his counterattack within the overall defensive effort. Counterattacks afford the defender the opportunity to create favorable conditions for the commitment of combat power. The platoon should rehearse the counterattack and prepare the ground to be traversed. Counterattacks are more useful to the higher headquarters when the platoon anticipates employment, plans and prepares for employment, and executes with the other defending, delaying, or attacking forces in conjunction with the higher commander's plan.

4-32. SPOILING ATTACK

A spoiling attack is a form of attack that preempts or seriously impairs an enemy attack while the enemy is in the process of planning or preparing to attack. The purpose of a spoiling attack is to disrupt the enemy's offensive capabilities and timelines while destroying his personnel and equipment. The purpose is not to secure terrain or other physical objectives. A commander (company or battalion) may direct a platoon to conduct a spoiling attack during friendly defensive preparations to strike the enemy while

he is in assembly areas or attack positions, preparing for his own offensive operation. The platoon leader plans for a spoiling attack as he does for other attacks. The reasons for conducting a spoiling attack include:

- Disrupt the enemy's offensive preparations.
- Destroy assets that the enemy requires to attack (fire support systems, logistic resupply points, or engineering equipment).
- Gain additional time for the defending force to prepare positions.

4-33. FEINT
A feint is a form of attack used to deceive the enemy as to the location and time of the actual operation. Feints attempt to deceive the enemy and induce him to move reserves and shift his fire support to locations where they cannot immediately impact the actual operation. When directed to conduct a feint, the platoon seeks direct fire (or physical) contact with the enemy, but avoids decisive engagement. The commander (company or battalion) will assign the platoon an objective limited in size or scope. The planning, preparation, and execution considerations are the same as for the other forms of attack. The enemy must be convinced that the feint is the actual attack.

4-34. DEMONSTRATION
A demonstration is a form of attack designed to deceive the enemy as to the location or time of the actual operation by a display of force. Demonstrations attempt to deceive the enemy and induce him to move reserves and shift his fire support to locations where they cannot immediately impact the actual operation. When directed to conduct a demonstration, the platoon does not seek physical contact with the enemy. The planning, preparation, and execution considerations are the same as for the other forms of attack. It must appear to be an actual impending attack.

Section VIII. OFFENSIVE TACTICAL TASKS
Tactical tasks are specific activities performed by units as they conduct tactical operations or maneuver. At the platoon level, these tasks are the warfighting actions the platoon may be called on to perform in battle. This section provides discussion and examples of actions and tasks the platoon may be called upon to perform during a movement to contact, a hasty attack, or a deliberate attack.

NOTE: The situations used in this section to describe the platoon leader's role in the conduct of tactical tasks are examples only. They are not applicable in every tactical operation, nor are they intended to prescribe any specific method or technique the platoon must use in achieving the purpose of the operation. Ultimately, it is up to the commander or leader on the ground to apply the principles discussed here, along with his knowledge of the situation (including his unit's capabilities, the enemy he is fighting, and the ground on which the battle is taking place), in developing a successful tactical solution.

4-35. SEIZE

Seizing an objective is complex and entails closure with the enemy, under fire of his weapons, to the point that the assaulting force gains positional advantage over or destroys the enemy.

a. A platoon may seize prepared or unprepared enemy positions from either an offensive or defensive posture. Examples include:

- A platoon seizes the far side of an obstacle as part of a company breach.
- A platoon seizes a portion of an enemy defense as part of a company deliberate attack.
- A platoon seizes key terrain to prevent its use by the enemy.

b. There are many inherent dangers in seizing an objective: deadly enemy fires; a rapidly changing operational environment; the requirement to execute a dismounted assault; and the possibility of fratricide when friendly forces converge. Taken together, these factors dictate that the platoon leader and subordinate leaders understand the following planning considerations.

(1) Developing a clear and current picture of the enemy situation is very important. The platoon may seize an objective in a variety of situations, and the platoon leader will often face unique challenges in collecting and disseminating information on the situation. For example, if the platoon is the seizing force during a company deliberate attack, the platoon leader may be able to develop an accurate picture of the enemy situation during the planning and preparation for the operation. He can concentrate on developing thorough FRAGOs to issue new information to the platoon as needed.

(2) In another instance, the platoon leader may have to develop his picture of the enemy situation during execution. He must rely more heavily on reports from units in contact and on his own development of the situation. In this type of situation, such as when the platoon is seizing an enemy combat security outpost during a movement to contact, the platoon leader must plan on relaying information as it develops. He uses clear, concise FRAGOs to explain the enemy situation and give directives to subordinates. He must know how to develop and issue these orders quickly under the pressures of the battlefield environment.

(3) In either type situation, the platoon leader and his subordinate leaders must be adaptive and make necessary adjustments to the scheme of maneuver based on the available information. This will help to ensure they overcome the enemy they will actually face on the ground and not merely a templated enemy force.

(4) Seizing an objective entails closure with the enemy to gain positional advantage over him, controlling the terrain, and the removal of all enemy forces or the elimination of organized resistance. The platoon may have to use both mounted and dismounted maneuver to gain the advantage and seize the objective. Factors influencing the platoon leader's decision to combine mounted and dismounted elements to seize the objective include the following.

(a) *Mission Analysis.* The company commander's intent and concept likely will dictate how the platoon maneuvers to the objective.

(b) Enemy Antitank Capabilities. The presence of antitank assets on or around the objective will put the ICVs at risk. The preferred COA is to destroy or suppress the enemy's antitank assets and allow the ICVs to support the assault.

c. The platoon leader must plan for and implement indirect fire support in his plan.

(1) The company or platoon uses smoke to isolate the targeted enemy force and to hinder the enemy as he attempts to reposition or reinforce his forces.

(2) The company or platoon uses suppressive indirect fires to prevent adjacent or reserve enemy elements from engaging the assaulting force.

(3) To protect the approaching assault force, the company or platoon uses indirect fires to suppress or destroy the enemy on the objective area.

d. While serving as the assault force in a company deliberate attack, the platoon may have to conduct an assault breach of the enemy's protective obstacles to gain access to the objective area. Protective obstacles normally are integrated with existing obstacles and restricted terrain.

e. In most circumstances, the company sets the conditions for the platoon to seize the objective. The purpose of this effort is to achieve an acceptable superior force ratio for the assaulting platoon. If the platoon is seizing an objective as part of a company attack, other platoons in the company normally will be responsible for suppressing the enemy on the objective area from designated support-by-fire positions. These platoons may be the same support forces that protected the breach force. Terrain factors may require them to reposition to provide effective support for the assault force. If the platoon is seizing an objective that is not part of a company deliberate attack it may have to establish its own support-by-fire positions to suppress the enemy and protect its assault force. Regardless of who provides support by fire (another platoon or internal elements), the platoon must always integrate the principles of fire and movement (maneuver) when executing the assault.

f. The platoon normally uses an ASLT PSN, the last covered and concealed position short of the objective, when the platoon is the assault force in a company deliberate attack. It can use an ASLT PSN along with a PLD, or it may use a PLD in lieu of an assault position. Actions at the assault position or the PLD could include these critical functions:

- Verify current friendly and enemy situations using tactical reports from platoon or company support-by-fire forces.
- Issue FRAGOs and disseminate information to the lowest level.
- Confirm TRPs and direct-fire responsibilities.
- Position field artillery observers.
- Conduct final prepare-to-fire checks.
- Reorganize to compensate for combat losses.

4-36. CLEAR
The platoon may be tasked with clearing an objective area during an attack to facilitate the movement of the remainder of the company, or the platoon may be assigned clearance of a specific part of a larger objective area. Infantry platoons normally are best suited to conduct clearance operations, which in many cases will involve working in restricted terrain. Situations in which the platoon may conduct the clearance tactical task include the following (refer to FM 90-10 and FM 3-06.11 [FM 90-10-1] for a detailed discussion of urban combat):

- Clearing a defile, including choke points in the defile and high ground surrounding it.
- Clearing a heavily wooded area.

- Clearing a built-up or strip area.
- Clearing a road, trail, or other narrow corridor, which may include obstacles or other obstructions on the actual roadway as well as in the surrounding wooded and built-up areas.

a. **General Terrain Considerations.** The platoon leader must consider several important terrain factors in planning and executing the clearance task.

(1) Observation and fields of fire may favor the enemy. To be successful, the attacking force must neutralize this advantage by identifying dead spaces where the enemy cannot see or engage friendly forces. It should also identify multiple support-by-fire positions that are necessary to support a complex scheme of maneuver covering the platoon's approach, the actual clearance task, and maneuver beyond the restricted terrain.

(2) Cover and concealment normally are abundant for infantry elements, but are scarce for trail-bound vehicles. Lack of cover leaves vehicles vulnerable to ATGM fires.

(3) Obstacles influence the maneuver of any vehicle entering the objective area. The narrow corridors, trails, or roads associated with restricted terrain can be easily obstructed with wire, mines, and log cribs.

(4) Key terrain may include areas dominating the objective area, approaches, or exits, as well as any terrain dominating the area inside the defile, wooded area, or built-up area.

(5) Avenues of approach will be limited. The platoon must consider the impact of canalization and estimate how much time will be required to clear the objective area.

b. **Restricted Terrain Considerations.** Conducting clearance in restricted terrain is both time consuming and resource intensive. During the planning process, the platoon leader evaluates the tactical requirements, resources, and other considerations for each operation.

(1) During the approach, the platoon leader focuses on moving combat power into the restricted terrain and posturing it to start clearing the terrain. The approach ends when the rifle squads complete their preparations to conduct an attack.

(a) The platoon leader establishes support-by-fire positions.

(b) He destroys or suppresses any known enemy positions to allow forces to approach the restricted terrain.

(c) He provides more security by incorporating suppressive indirect fires and obscuring or screening smoke.

(d) The platoon leader provides support by fire for the rifle squads. He prepares to support the rifle squads from their dismount points to where they enter the restricted terrain using--

- High ground on either side of a defile.
- Wooded areas on either side of a trail or road.
- Buildings on either side of a road in a built-up area.
- Movement of rifle squads along axes to provide cover and concealment.

(2) Clearance begins as the rifle squads begin their attack in and around the restricted terrain. Examples of where this maneuver may take place include:

- Both sides of a defile, either along the ridgelines or high along the walls of the defile.
- Along the wood lines parallel to a road or trail.

- Around and between buildings on either side of the roadway in a built-up area.

(3) The following apply during clearance:

(a) The squads provide a base of fire to allow the weapons squad to bound to a new support-by-fire position. This cycle continues until the entire area is cleared.

(b) Direct-fire plans should cover responsibility for both horizontal and vertical observation and direct fire.

(c) Squads should clear a defile from the top down and should be oriented on objectives on the far side of the defile.

(d) Dismounted engineers with manual breaching capability should move with the rifle squads. Engineers also should move with the overwatching element to reduce obstacles.

(4) The platoon must secure the far side of the defile, built-up area, or wooded area until the company moves forward to pick up the fight beyond the restricted terrain. If the restricted area is large, the platoon may be directed to assist the passage of another element forward to continue the clearance operation. The platoon must be prepared to--

- Destroy enemy forces.
- Secure the far side of the restricted terrain.
- Maneuver mounted elements to establish support-by-fire positions on the far side of the restricted terrain.
- Support by fire to protect the deployment of the follow-on force assuming the fight.
- Suppress any enemy elements that threaten the company while it exits the restricted terrain.
- Disrupt enemy counterattacks.
- Protect the obstacle reduction effort.
- Maintain observation beyond the restricted terrain.
- Integrate indirect fires as necessary.

c. **Enemy Analysis.** Careful analysis of the enemy situation is necessary to ensure the success of clearing. The enemy evaluation should include the following:

- Enemy vehicle location, key weapons, and infantry elements in the area of operations.
- Type and locations of enemy reserve forces.
- Type and locations of enemy OPs
- The impact of the enemy's NBC and or artillery capabilities.

d. **Belowground Operations.** Belowground operations entail clearing enemy trenches, tunnels, basements, and bunker complexes. The platoon's base-of-fire element and the maneuvering squads must maintain close coordination. The weapons squad focuses on protecting the squads as they clear the trench line or maneuver to destroy individual or vehicle positions. The base-of-fire element normally concentrates on destroying key surface structures (especially command posts and crew-served weapons bunkers) and the suppression and destruction of enemy vehicles. As noted previously, the direct-fire plan (refer to Appendix F) must be thoroughly developed and rehearsed to ensure it will facilitate effective mutual support while preventing fratricide.

(1) The platoon must establish a base of fire to allow the rifle squads to dismount and then maneuver or enter the trench line, tunnel, basement, or bunker. The direct-fire plan

must be thoroughly developed and rehearsed to ensure it will facilitate effective protection for the infantry while preventing fratricide.

(2) The platoon leader also must consider specific hazards associated with the platoon or supporting weapon systems. An example is the downrange hazard for the dismounted rifle squads created by the Javelins or MGS.

(2) The platoon should consider using restrictive fire measures to protect converging forces and other direct-fire control measures, such as visual signals, to trigger the requirement to lift, shift, or cease direct fires. Techniques for controlling direct fires during trench, tunnel, basement, and bunker clearance may include attaching a flag to a pole carried by the soldier who follows immediately behind the lead clearing team; using panels to mark cleared bunkers, tunnels and basements; and using visual signals to indicate when to lift or shift fires.

(3) Once the rifle squads enter the belowground area, the combined effects of the platoon's assets place the enemy in a dilemma. Every action the enemy takes to avoid direct fire from the support-by-fire element, such as maintaining defiled positions or abandoning bunker complexes, leaves him vulnerable to attack from the rifle squads maneuvering down the trench. Conversely, when enemy vehicles move to avoid the attacking squads or when the enemy's infantry elements stay in bunkers or command posts, they expose themselves to support fires.

(4) Consolidation consists of actions taken to secure the objective and defend against an enemy counterattack. The platoon leader must plan and prepare for consolidation. He ensures the platoon is ready to--

- Eliminate enemy resistance on the objective.
- Establish security beyond the objective by securing areas that may be the source of enemy direct fires or enemy artillery observation.
- Establish additional security measures such as OPs and patrols.
- Prepare for and assist the passage of follow-on forces (if required).
- Continue to improve security by conducting other necessary defensive actions. (These steps, which are outlined in Chapter 5 of this manual, include engagement area development, direct-fire planning, and battle position (BP) preparation.)
- Adjust the established FPF (if required).
- Protect the obstacle reduction effort.
- Secure EPWs.

(5) Reorganization, normally conducted concurrently with consolidation, consists of actions taken to prepare for follow-on operations. As with consolidation, the platoon leader must plan and prepare for reorganization as he conducts his TLP. He ensures the platoon is prepared to--

- Provide essential medical treatment and evacuate casualties as necessary.
- Cross-level personnel and adjust task organization as required.
- Conduct resupply operations, including rearming and refueling.
- Redistribute ammunition.
- Conduct required maintenance.

4-37. SUPPRESS

The platoon maneuvers to a position on the battlefield from which it can observe the enemy and engage him with direct and indirect fires. The purpose of suppressing is to prevent the enemy from effectively engaging friendly forces with direct fires or observed indirect fires. To accomplish this, the platoon must maintain orientation both on the enemy force and on the friendly maneuver force it is supporting. During planning and preparation, the platoon leader should consider doing the following:

- Conduct a line-of-sight analysis during his terrain analysis to identify the most advantageous positions from which to suppress the enemy.
- Plan and integrate direct and indirect fires.
- Determine control measures (triggers) for lifting, shifting or ceasing direct fires (refer to Appendix F).
- Determine control measures for shifting or ceasing indirect fires.
- Plan and rehearse actions on contact.
- Plan for large Class V expenditures. (The company commander and the platoon leader must consider a number of factors in assessing Class V requirements including the desired effects of the platoon direct fires; the composition, disposition, and strength of the enemy force; and the time required to suppress the enemy.)
- Determine when and how the platoon will reload ammunition during the fight while still maintaining suppression for the assaulting force.
- Determine how many, if any, of the rifle squads will dismount the ICVs.

4-38. SUPPORT BY FIRE

The platoon maneuvers to a position on the battlefield from which it can observe the enemy and engage him with direct and indirect fires. The purpose of support by fire is to prevent the enemy from engaging friendly forces.

a. To accomplish this task, the platoon must maintain orientation both on the enemy force and on the friendly maneuver force it is supporting. The platoon leader should plan and prepare by:

- Conducting line-of-sight analysis to identify the most advantageous support-by-fire positions.
- Conducting planning and integration for direct and indirect fires.
- Determining triggers for lifting, shifting, or ceasing direct and indirect fires.
- Planning and rehearsing actions on contact.
- Planning for large Class V expenditures, especially for the weapons squad and support elements since they must calculate rounds per minute. (The platoon leader and weapons squad leader must consider a number of factors in assessing Class V requirements, to include the desired effects of platoon fires; the time required for suppressing the enemy; and the composition, disposition, and strength of the enemy force.)

b. A comprehensive understanding of the battlefield and enemy and friendly disposition is a crucial factor in all support-by-fire operations. The platoon leader uses all available intelligence and information resources to stay abreast of events on the battlefield. Additional considerations may apply. The platoon may have to execute an attack to secure the terrain from which it will conduct the support by fire. The initial support-by-fire position may not afford adequate security or may not allow the platoon to

achieve its intended purpose. This could force the platoon to reposition to maintain the desired weapons effects on the enemy. The platoon leader must ensure the platoon adheres to these guidelines:

- Maintain communications with the moving force.
- Be prepared to support the moving force with both direct and indirect fires.
- Be ready to lift, shift, or cease fires when masked by the moving force.
- Scan the area of operations and prepare to acquire and destroy any enemy element that threatens the moving force.
- Maintain 360-degree security.
- Use ICVs and Javelins to destroy any exposed enemy vehicles.
- Employ squads to lay a base of sustained fire to keep the enemy fixed or suppressed in his fighting positions.
- Prevent the enemy from employing accurate direct fires against the protected force.

4-39. ATTACK BY FIRE

The platoon maneuvers to a position on the battlefield from which it can observe the enemy and engage him with direct and indirect fires at a distance to destroy or weaken a maneuvering enemy force. The platoon destroys the enemy or prevents him from repositioning. The platoon employs long-range fires from dominating terrain, uses flanking fires, or can take advantage of the standoff range of the unit's weapons systems. The company commander may designate an attack-by-fire (ABF) position from which the platoon will fix the enemy. An ABF position is most commonly employed when the mission or tactical situation neither dictates nor supports occupation of the objective; rather, it focuses on destruction or preventing enemy movement. In the offense, it is usually executed by supporting elements. During defensive operations, it is often a counterattack option for the reserve force.

a. When the platoon is assigned an ABF position, the platoon leader obtains the most current intelligence update on the enemy and applies his analysis to the information. During planning and preparation, the platoon leader should consider the following:

- Conduct a line-of-sight analysis during terrain analysis to identify the most favorable locations to destroy or fix the enemy.
- Conduct direct and indirect fire planning and integration.
- Determine control measures (triggers) for lifting, shifting, or ceasing direct fires.
- Determine control measures for shifting or ceasing indirect fires.
- Plan and rehearse actions on contact.

b. Several other considerations may affect the successful execution of an attack by fire. The platoon may be required to conduct an attack against enemy security forces to seize the ground from which it will establish the ABF position. The initial ABF position may afford inadequate security or may not allow the platoon to achieve its task or purpose. This could force the platoon to reposition to maintain the desired weapons effects on the enemy force. In addition, because an attack by fire may be conducted well beyond the direct fire range of other platoons, it may not allow the platoon to destroy the targeted enemy force from its initial positions. The platoon may begin to fix the enemy at extended ranges. Additional maneuver then would be required to close with the enemy

force and complete its destruction. Throughout an attack by fire, the platoon should reposition or maneuver to maintain flexibility, increase survivability, and maintain desired weapons effects on the enemy. It should also employ rifle squads whenever possible to assist mounted sections. Rifle squad support functions may include the following:

- Seize ABF position before occupation by mounted sections.
- Provide local security for the ABF position.
- Execute timely, decisive actions on contact.
- Use maneuver to move to and occupy ABF positions.
- Destroy enemy security elements protecting the targeted force.
- Employ effective direct and indirect fires to disrupt, fix, or destroy the enemy force.